Write about

Practical Discourses UPON THE CONSIDERATION OF Our Latter End; AND THE *Danger* and *Mischief* OF Delaying Repentance.

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SERMON I.

The Conſideration of our latter End.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.

THIS *Pſalm* is upon ſeveral peculiar accompts very remarkable; for its antiquity, in which it perhaps doth not yeild to any parcel of Scripture; for the eminency of its Authour, *Moſes* the Man of God; the greateſt of the ancient Prophets (moſt in favour, and (as it were)

moſt intimate with God:) 'Tis alſo remarkable for the form and matter thereof, both affording much uſefull inſtruction. In it we have a great Prince, the Governour of a numerous People ſequeſtring his Mind from the management of publick Affairs to private Meditations; from beholding the preſent outward appearances, to conſidering the real nature and ſecret cauſes of things; In the midſt of all the Splendour and Pomp of all the ſtir and tumult about him he obſerves the frailty of humane condition, he diſcerns the Providence of God juſtly ordering all; this he does not onely in way of wiſe conſideration, but of ſerious devotion, mouſding his obſervations into pious acknowledgments, and earneſt Prayers to God; thus while he caſts one eye upon Earth viewing the occurrences there, lifting up the other to Heaven; there ſeeing God's all-governing Hand, thence ſeeking his gracious Favour and Mercy. Thus doth here that great and good

good Man teach us all, (more particularly men of high Eſtate, and much Buſineſs) to find opportunities of withdrawing their thoughts from thoſe things, which commonly amuſe them (the Cares, the Glories, the Pleaſures of this World) and fixing them upon matters more improvable to devotion; the tranſitorineſs of their Condition, and their ſubjection to God's juſt Providence; joining alſo to theſe Meditations ſutable acts of Religion, due acknowledgments to God and humble Prayers. This was his practice among the greateſt encumbrances that any Man could have; and it ſhould alſo be ours. Of thoſe his devotions, addreſſed to God, the Words are part, which I have choſen for the ſubject of my meditation and preſent diſcourſe; concerning the meaning of which I ſhall firſt touch ſomewhat; then propound that obſervable in them, which I deſign to inſiſt upon.

The Prophet *David* hath in the 39th *Pſalm* a Prayer very near in words, and of kin (it ſeems) in
Pſa. 39. 4. ſenſe to this here; *Lord*, prays he, *Make me to know my end, and the meaſure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am:* Concerning the drift of which place, as well as of this here, it were obvious to conceive, that both theſe Prophets do requeſt of God, that he would diſcover to them the definite term of their life (which by his decree he had fixed, or however by his univerſal preſcience he did diſcern; concerning which we have
Job 14. 5. theſe words in *Job*, *Seeing man's days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou haſt appointed his bounds, that he cannot paſs*) we might, I ſay, at firſt hearing be apt to imagine, that their Prayer unto God is, (for the comfort of their mind burthened with afflictions, or for their better direction in the management of their remaining time of life) that God would

would reveal unto them the determinate length of their life. But this ſenſe, which the Words ſeem ſo naturally to hold forth is by many of the Fathers rejected; for that the knowledge of our lives determinate meaſure is not a fit matter of Prayer to God; that being a ſecret reſerved by God to himſelf, which to inquire into ſavours of preſumptuous curioſity; the univerſal validity of which reaſon I will not debate; but ſhall defer ſo much to their judgment, as to ſuppoſe that the numbring of our days (according to their ſenſe) doth here onely imply a confuſed indefinite computation of our days number, or the length of our life; ſuch as, upon which it may appear, that neceſſarily our life cannot be long (not according to the accompt mentioned in this *Pſalm* (the ſame with that of *Solon*, in *Herodotus*) above ſeventy or eighty Years, eſpecially as to purpoſes of health, ſtrength, content) will probably by reaſon of

various accidents, to which it is expoſed, be much ſhorter (ſeven or ten Years according to a moderate eſteem) may poſſibly, from ſurpriſes undiſcoverable, be very near to its period; by few inſtants removed from death (a Year, a Month, a Day, it may be ſomewhat leſs.) This I ſhall allow to be the *Arithmetick* that *Moſes* here deſires to learn; whence it doth follow that teaching (or making to know, ſo it is in the *Hebrew*) doth import here (as it doth other-where frequently in Scripture) God's affording the Grace to know practically, or with ſerious regard to conſider this ſtate and meaſure of our life (for in ſpeculation no Man can be ignorant of humane lifes brevity and uncertainty; but moſt Men are ſo negligent and ſtupid, as not to regard it ſufficiently, not to employ this knowledge to any good purpoſe.) This Inter-

Οὐ γὰρ ὅτι φρένας ἔχει ἀνθρώπου ἀγνοεῖν, ὅτι ἄνθρωπος θνητὸν, ὡς ὅτι γέγονεν εἰς τὸ ἀποθανεῖν. Plut. *ad* Apoll. p. 202.

Quis eſt tam ſtultus, quamvis ſit adoleſcens, cui ſit exploratum ſe vel ad veſperum eſſe victurum. Cic. *de Sen.*

Interpretation I chuſe, being in it ſelf plauſible enough, and countenanced by ſo good authority; yet the former might well enough (by good conſequence, if not ſo immediately) ſerve my deſign: Or be a ground able to ſupport the diſcourſe I intend to build upon the Words; the ſubject whereof briefly will be this, that the conſideration of our lives certain and neceſſary brevity and frailty, is a mean proper and apt to diſpoſe us toward the wiſe conduct of our remaining life; to which purpoſe ſuch a conſideration ſeems alike available, as the knowledge of its punctual or definite meaſure; or more than it; upon the ſame, or greater reaſons.

As for the latter clauſe, *that we may apply our hearts to wiſdom*; 'tis according to the *Hebrew*, *And we ſhall bring the heart to wiſdom*; implying, the application of our hearts to wiſdom to be conſequent upon the skill and practice (beſtowed by God) of thus computing our days.

As for *wiſdom*, that may denote either *ſapience*, a habit of knowing what is true; or prudence, a diſpoſition of chuſing what is good; we may here underſtand both, eſpecially the latter; for, as *Tully* ſaith of Philoſophy, *Omnis ſumma Philoſophiæ ad beate vivendum refertur*, The ſumm or whole of Philoſophy refers to living happily; ſo all Divine Wiſdom doth reſpect good practice. The word alſo comprehends all the conſequences and adjuncts of ſuch wiſdom (for ſo commonly ſuch words are wont by way of *metonymie* to denote, together with the things primarily ſignified, all that naturally flow from, or that uſually are conjoined with them) in brief (to ceaſe from more explaining that, which is in it ſelf conſpicuous enough) I ſo underſtand the Text, as if the Prophet had thus expreſſed himſelf: Since, O Lord, all things are in thy hand, and Sovereign diſpoſal; ſince it appears that Man's

De fin. II. p. 95.

Natura dedit uſuram vitæ, tanquam pecuniæ, nulla præſtituta die. Tuſc. *quæſt. I.* p. 326.

Man's life is ſo ſhort and frail, ſo vexatious and miſerable, ſo expoſed to the juſt effects of thy diſpleaſure; we humbly beſeech thee, ſo to inſtruct us by thy Wiſdom, ſo to diſpoſe us by thy grace; that we may effectually know; that we may ſeriouſly conſider the brevity and uncertainty of our lives durance; whence we may be induced to underſtand, regard, and chuſe thoſe things which good reaſon dictates beſt for us; which according to true Wiſdom, it moſt concerns us to know and perform. From which ſenſe of the words we might infer many uſefull documents, and draw matter of much wholſome diſcourſe; but paſſing over all the reſt, I ſhall onely inſiſt upon that one point, which I before intimated, *viz.* that the ſerious conſideration of the ſhortneſs and frailty of our life is a proper inſtrument conducible to the bringing our hearts to Wiſdom, to the making us to diſcern, attend unto, embrace and proſecute ſuch things

things as are truly beſt for us; that it is available to the prudent conduct and management of our life; the truth of which propoſition is grounded upon the divine Prophet his opinion: he apprehended ſuch a knowledge or conſideration to be a profitable means of inducing his heart to Wiſdom; wherefore he prays God to grant it him in order to that end; ſuppoſing that effect would proceed from this cauſe. And that it is ſo in way of reaſonable influence I ſhall endeavour to ſhew by ſome following reaſons.

1 John 1. 17. *Love not the world*; for—— *the world paſſeth away, and the deſire thereof.*

I. The ſerious conſideration of our lifes frailty and ſhortneſs will confer to our right valuation (or eſteem) of things, and conſequently to our well-placing, and our duly moderating our cares, affections and endeavours about them. For as we value things, ſo are we uſed to affect them, to ſpend our thoughts upon them, to be earneſt

neſt in purſuance or avoiding of them. There be two ſorts of things we converſe about, good and bad; the former, according to the degree of their appearance ſo to us (that is, according to our eſtimation of them) we naturally love, delight in, deſire and purſue; the other likewiſe in proportion to our opinion concerning them, we do more or leſs loath and ſhun. Our Actions therefore being all thus directed and grounded, to eſteem things aright both in kind and degree (ἐκάστῳ ἀποδιδόναι τὴν ἀξίαν, to aſſign every thing its due price, as *Epictetus* ſpeaks; *quanti quidque ſit judicare*, to judge what each thing is worth as *Seneca*,) is in order the firſt, in degree a main part of wiſdom; and as ſo is frequently by wiſe men commended. Now among qualities that commend or vilifie things unto us, duration and certainty have a chief place; they often

Primum eſt, ut quanti quidque ſit judices; ſecundum, ut impetum ad illa capias ordinatum temperatumque; tertium, ut inter impetum tuum, actionemque conveniat, ut in omnibus iſtis tibi ipſi conſentias. Sen. *Epiſt.* 89.

often alone ſuffice to render things valuable or contemptible. Why is Gold more precious than Glaſs or Cryſtal? why prefer we a Ruby before a Roſe, or a Gilly-flower? 'tis not becauſe thoſe are more ſerviceable, more beautifull, more grateſull to our ſenſes than theſe (it is plainly otherwiſe) but becauſe theſe are brittle and fading, thoſe ſolid and permanent; theſe we cannot hope to retain the uſe or pleaſure of long; thoſe we may promiſe our ſelves to enjoy ſo long as we pleaſe; whence on the other ſide is it, that we little fear or ſhun any thing how painfull, how offenſive ſo-ever, being aſſured of its ſoon paſſing over, the biting of a flea, or the prick in letting bloud? The reaſon is evident; and that in general nothing can on either hand be conſiderable (either to value or diſeſteem) which is of a ſhort continuance. Upon this ground therefore let us tax the things concerning us whether good or bad, relating to this life,

life, or to our future ſtate; and firſt the good things relating to this life; thence we ſhall be diſpoſed to judge truly concerning them, what their juſt price is, how much of affection, care and endeavour they deſerve to have expended on them. In general, and in the lump concerning them all St. *Paul* tells us, that τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου παράγει, *the* ſhape or *faſhion* (all that is apparent or ſenſible) in *this preſent world doth flit, and ſoon give us the go-by:* We gaze a-while upon theſe things, as *in tranſitu*, or *intra conſpectum*; as they paſs by us, and keep a-while in ſight; but they are preſently gone from us, or we from them. They are but like objects repreſented in a Glaſs; which having viewed a-while, we muſt ſhortly turn our backs, or ſhut our eyes upon them, then all vaniſhes and diſappears unto us. Whence he well infers an indifferency of affection toward them; a ſlackneſs

1 Cor. 7. 31.

—πάντα παρέρχεται ἡμᾶς, Εἰ μὴ, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ πάντα παρερχόμεθα. *Gr. Epig. Anthol.*

ſlackneſs in the enjoyment of them to be required of us; a *uſing this world, as if we uſed it not*; a *buying, as if we were not to poſſeſs*; a *weeping, as if we wept not*; *and* a *rejoycing, as if we rejoyced not*; a kind of negligence and unconcernedneſs about theſe things. *The world* (ſaith St. *John*) *paſſeth away, and the deſire thereof*; what-ever ſeemeth moſt lovely and deſirable in the World is very flitting; how-ever our deſire and our enjoyment thereof muſt ſuddenly ceaſe. Imagine a man therefore poſſeſſed of all worldly goods, arm'd with power, flouriſhing in credit, flowing with plenty, ſwimming in all delight (ſuch as were ſometime *Priamus*, *Polycrates*, *Cræſus*, *Pompey*) yet ſince he is withall ſuppoſed a man and mortal; ſubject both to fortune and death; none of thoſe things can he reaſonably conſide, or much ſatisfy himſelf in; they may be violently divorced from him by fortune, they muſt naturally be looſed from him by death;

1 John 2. 17. Ἐπιθυμία αὐτῆς.

death; the closest union here cannot last longer than till death us depart; wherefore no man upon such accompt can truly call or (if he consider well) heartily esteem himself happy; a *man cannot* hence (as the most able judge, and trusty voucher of the commodities doth pronounce) *receive profit or content from any labour he taketh* (upon these transitory things) *under the sun.* Why then (let me inquire) do we so cumber our heads with care, so rack our hearts with passion, so waste our spirits with incessant toil about these transitory things? why do we so highly value, so ardently desire, so eagerly pursue, so fondly delight in, so impatiently want, or lose, so passionately contend for and emulate one another in regard to these bubbles; forfeiting and foregoing our homebred most precious goods, tranquillity and repose, either of mind or body, for them? Why erect we such mighty fabricks of expectation and confidence upon such

Eccl. 1. 3, &c.

Commorandi natura nobis diverſorium dedit, non habitandi locum. Cic. *de Sen.*

1 Pet. 2. 11. 1. Heb. 13. 11. 11. 15. 1 Chron. 29. 15. Job 14. 1. Pſal. 78. 39. Jam. 4. 14. Iſa. 64. 6. Pſal. 102. 3. 90. 5. 9. 103. 15. 39. 5. 144. 4. 119. 19. Pſal. 103. 15. Iſa. 40. 6.

ſuch unſteady ſands? Why dreſs we up theſe our Inns, as if they were our homes, and are as carefull about a few nights lodging here, as if we deſigned an everlaſting aboad (we that are but *ſojourners and pilgrims* here, and have *no fixed habitation* upon earth; who *come forth like a flower, and are ſoon cut down; flee like a ſhadow, and continue not; are winds paſſing away, and coming not again; who fade all like a leaf, whoſe life is a vapour appearing for a little time, and then vaniſhing away; whoſe days are a handbreadth, and age as nothing; whoſe days are conſumed like ſmoak, and years are ſpent as a tale. Who wither like the graſs*, upon which we feed; *and crumble as the duſt*, of which we are compacted; for thus the Scripture by appoſite compariſons repreſents our condition) yet we build (like the Men of *Agrigentum*) as if we were to dwell here for ever; and hoard up, as if we were to enjoy after many ages; and inquire, as if we would never have

have done knowing? The Citizens of *Croton* (a Town in *Italy*) had a manner (it is said) of inviting to Feasts a Year before the time, that the Guests in appetite and garb might come well prepared to them; do we not usually resemble them in this ridiculous solicitude and curiosity; *spes inchoando longas*, commencing designs, driving on projects, which a longer time than our life would not suffice to accomplish? How deeply do we concern our selves in all that is said or done; when the morrow all will be done away and forgotten? when (excepting what our duty to God, and charity towards men requires of us, and that which concerns our future eternal state) what is done in the World, who gets or loses, which of the spokes in fortune's wheel is up, and which down, is of very little consequence to us. But the more to abstract our minds from, and temper our affections about these secular matters, let us examine particu-

larly by this ſtandard, whether the moſt valued things in this World deſerve that eſtimate which they bear in the common Market, or which popular opinion aſſigns them.

1. To begin then with that which takes chief place, which the World moſt dotes on, which ſeems moſt great and eminent among men; ſecular ſtate and grandeur, might and proweſs, honour and reputation, favour and applauſe of men, all the objects of humane pride and ambition; of this kind, St. *Peter* thus pronounces; πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου, *All the glory of the men is as the flower of the graſs; the graſs is dried up, and the flower thereof doth fall off*; 'tis as the flower of the graſs, how ſpecious ſo ever, yet the moſt fading and failing part thereof; the graſs it ſelf will ſoon wither, and the flower doth commonly fall off before that. We cannot hold this flower of worldly glory beyond our ſhort time of life; and we may eaſi-

1 Pet. 2. 24.

ly

ly much ſooner be deprived of it: Many tempeſts of fortune may beat it down, many violent hands may crop it, 'tis apt of its ſelf to fade upon the ſtalk; how-ever the Sun (the influence of age and time) will aſſuredly burn and dry it up, with our life that upholds it. *Surely* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lye:* Men of high degree; the mighty Princes, the famous Captains, the ſubtile Stateſmen, the grave Senatours; they who turn and toſs about the World at their pleaſure; who, (in the *Prophet's* language) *make the Earth tremble, and ſhake Kingdoms:* Even theſe, they are a lie; (ſaid he, who himſelf was none of the leaſt conſiderable among them, and by experience well knew their condition, the greateſt and moſt glorious Man of his time King *David.*) They are a lie; that is, their ſtate preſents ſomething of brave and admirable to the eye of Men; but 'tis onely *deceptio viſus;*

Pſal. 62. 9.

Iſa. 14. 17.

viſus; a ſhew without a ſubſtance; it doth but delude the careleſs ſpectatours with falſe appearance; it hath nothing under it ſolid or ſtable; being laid in the balance (the royal *Prophet* there ſubjoins; that is, being weighed in the ſcales of right judgment, being thoroughly conſidered) it will prove lighter than vanity it ſelf; it is leſs valuable than mere emptineſs, and nothing it ſelf; that ſaying ſounds like an *hyperbole*, but it may be true in a ſtrict ſenſe: Seeing, that the care and pains in maintaining it, the fear and jealouſie of loſing it, the envy, obloquy and danger that ſurround it, the ſnares it hath in it, and temptations inclining men to be pufft up with Pride, to be inſolent and injurious, to be corrupt with pleaſure (with other bad concomitants thereof) do more than countervail what-ever either of imaginary worth or real convenience may be in it. Perhaps could it without much care, trouble and hazard continue for ever, or for a long

long time, it might be thought somewhat conſiderable; but ſince its duration is uncertain and ſhort; ſince *man in honour abideth not, but is like the beaſts that periſh*; that they who look ſo *like Gods*, and are called ſo, and are worſhipped as ſo, *yet muſt die like* (like men, yea *like ſheep ſhall be laid in the grave*;) Since, as 'tis ſaid of the King of *Babylon* in *Eſay*; *their pomp muſt be brought down to the grave, and the noiſe of their viols; the worm ſhall be ſpread under them, and the worm ſhall cover them*; ſeeing that a moment of time ſhall extinguiſh all their luſtre, and ſtill all that tumult about them; that they muſt be diſrobed of their Purple, and be cloathed with Corruption; that their ſo ſpatious and ſplendid Palaces muſt ſoon be exchanged for cloſe darkſome Coffins; that both their own breath, and the breath of them who now applaud them muſt be ſtopped; that they who now bow to them, may preſently trample on them; and

Pſal. 82. 6.

Pſal. 49. 12, &c.

Iſa. 14. 11.

they who to day trembled at their preſence, may the morrow ſcornfully inſult upon their memory: *Is this the man* (will they ſay, as they did of that great King) *who made the Earth to tremble; that did ſhake Kingdoms; that made the World as a Wilderneſs; and deſtroyed the Kingdoms thereof?* Since this is the fate of the greateſt, and moſt glorious among Men, what reaſon can there be to admire their condition; to prize ſuch vain and ſhort-liv'd preeminences? For who can accompt it a great happineſs to be ſtyled and reſpected as a Prince, to enjoy all the Powers and Prerogatives of higheſt dignity for a day, or two; then being obliged to deſcend into a ſordid and deſpicable Eſtate? Who values the fortune of him that is brought forth upon the Stage to act the Part of a Prince; though he be attired there, and attended as ſuch; hath all the garb and ceremony, the enſigns and appurtenances of Majeſty about him; ſpeaks and behaves himſelf

Iſa. 14. 16.

ſelf imperiouſly; is flattered and worſhipped accordingly; yet, who in his heart doth adore this Idol; doth admire this mockery of greatneſs? Why not? becauſe after an hour or two the Play is over, and this Man's reign is done. And what great difference is there between this and the greateſt worldly ſtate? between *Alexander* in the Hiſtory, and *Alexander* on the Stage? Are not (in the *Pſalmiſt*'s accompt) *all our years ſpent as a tale that is told*; or, as a Fable, that is acted? This in compariſon of that, what is it at moſt, but telling the ſame ſtory, acting the ſame Part a few times over? What are a few years more than a few hours repeated not very often? not ſo often as to make any conſiderable difference; ſo a great Emperour reflected: τί διαφέρει τριήμερος τριγερηνίου; *what* (ſaid he) *doth the age of an infant, dying within three days, differ from that of Neſtor, who lived three ages of men*; ſince both ſhall be paſt, and ended; both then

Pſal. 90.

Anton. *IV.* 50.

Sen. *Ep.* 99. 24.

then meet, and thereby become equal; ſince conſidering the immenſe time that runs on, and how little a part thereof any of us takes up (*juvenes & ſenes in æquo ſumus*) we are all alike young and old; as a drop and a Pint bottle in compare to the Ocean are in a ſort equal, that is, both altogether inconſiderable. *Quid enim diu eſt, ubi finis eſt?* ſaith St. *Auſtine: what can be long that ſhall be ended*; which coming to that paſs is as if it never had been? Since then upon this accompt (upon worldly accompts, I ſpeak all this; and excepting that Dignity and Power may be Talents beſtowed by God, or advantages to ſerve God, and promote the good of Men; excepting alſo the relation Perſons juſtly inſtated in them bear to God as his Deputies and Miniſters; in which reſpects much reverence is due to their Perſons, much value to their Places; even the more, by how much leſs their preſent outward

Mihi ne diuturnum quidem quidquam videtur, in quo eſt aliquid extremum, &c. Cic. *de Senect.*

ward Estate is considerable, and because at present they receive so slender a reward for all their cares and pains employ'd in the discharge of their Offices; this I enterpose to prevent mistakes, lest our discourse should seem to disparage, or detract from the reverence due to Persons in eminent Place. But since, under this caution) all worldly Power and Glory appear so little valuable, the consideration hereof may avail to moderate our affections about them; to quell all ambitious desires of them, and all vain complacencies in them. For why should we so eagerly seek and pursue such empty shadows, which if we catch, we in effect catch nothing; and whatever it is, doth presently slip out of our hands? Why do we please our selves in such evanid dreams? is it not much better to rest quiet and content in any station wherein God hath placed us, than to trouble our selves and others in climbing higher to a Precipice, where we can hardly

ly ſtand upright, and whence we ſhall certainly tumble down into the grave? This conſideration is alſo a remedy, proper to remove all regret and envy grounded upon ſuch regards. For why, though ſuppoſe Men of ſmall worth, or vertue ſhould flouriſh in Honour and Power, ſhall we repine thereat? Is it not as if one ſhould envy to a Butterfly, its gaudy Wings; to a Tulip its beautifull colours, to the Graſs its pleaſant verdure; that Graſs, to which in this *Pſalm* we are compared; *which in the morning flouriſheth, and groweth up, in the evening is cut down and withereth?* I may ſay of this diſcourſe with the *Philoſopher*, ἰατικὸν μὲν ἴσως ἀντικὸν βοήθημα, 'tis a homely remedy (there may be divers better ones) yet hath its efficacy; for *David* himſelf made uſe thereof more than once: *Be not*, ſaith he, *afraid* (or troubled) *when one is made rich, when the glory of his houſe is encreaſed; for when he dieth he ſhall carry nothing away, his glory*

Pſal. 90. 6.

Ant. IV. § 50.

Pſal. 49. 16. 73. 17. 37. 1.

lory ſhall not deſcend with him. I Prov. 23. 17.
was (ſaith he again) *envious at the fooliſh, when I ſaw the proſperity of the wicked; but I went into the ſanctuary, then underſtood I their end; ſurely thou didſt ſet them in ſlippery places — how are they brought into deſolation as in a moment:* Thus conſidering the lubricity and tranſitorineſs of that Proſperity, which fooliſh and wicked Men enjoyed, did ſerve to cure that envious diſtemper, which began to affect the good man's Heart.

2. But let us deſcend from Dignity and Power (that is from names and ſhews) to ſomewhat ſeeming more real and ſubſtantial; to Riches; that great and general Idol, the moſt devoutly adored that ever any hath been in the World; which hath a Temple almoſt in every Houſe, an Altar in every Heart; to the gaining of which moſt of the thoughts, moſt of the labours of Men immediately tend; in the Poſſeſſion of which Men com-

commonly deem the greateſt Happineſs doth conſiſt. But this conſideration we diſcourſe about, will eaſily diſcover, that even this, as
1 Cor. 8. 4. all other Idols, is *nothing in the World*, nothing true and ſolid; Will (I ſay) juſtify that advice and ve-
Prov. 23. 5. rifie that aſſertion of the *Wiſe-man*: *Labour not for riches, wilt thou ſet thy heart upon that which is not?* it well applied will pluck down the high Places reared to this great Idol of Clay in Men's Hearts; will confute the common Conceits and Phraſes, which ſo beautifie Wealth; ſhewing that whoever dotes thereon is more truly and properly ſtyled a miſerable Man, than a happy,
*Ὀλβιος, *Beatus, &c. pro divite.* or bleſſed one: For is he not indeed miſerable, who *makes lies his*
Hab. 2. 9. *refuge*, who confides in that which will deceive and diſappoint him? The *Prophet* aſſures us ſo: *Woe* (ſaith the Prophet *Habbakuk*) *woe be to him, who coveteth an evil covetouſneſs to his houſe; that he may ſet his neſt on high, that he*

may

may be delivered from the power of evil: Men (he implies) imagine by getting Riches, they have ſecured and raiſed themſelves above the reach of all miſchief? But ye ſee it was in the *Prophet's* judgement a wofull miſtake. St. *Paul* doth warn Men (very emphatically) *not to hope* ὅτι πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, *in the uncertainty* (or obſcurity) *of riches*; intimating, that to truſt in them, is to truſt in darkneſs it ſelf; in that wherein we can diſcern nothing; in we know not what. They are, we cannot but obſerve, ſubject to an infinity of chances, many of them obvious and notorious; more of them ſecret and unaccomptable: *They make* (the *Wiſe-man* tells us) *themſelves wings* (they need it ſeems no help for that) *and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven* (quite out of ſight, and beyond our reach they of their own accord do ſwiftly fly away) however, ſhould they be diſpoſed to ſtay with us, we muſt fly from them;

1 Tim. 6. 19.

Prov. 23. 5.

them; were they inſeparably affix-
ed to this life, yet muſt they toge-
ther with that be ſevered from us;
as we came naked of them into this
World, ſo naked ſhall we return.
Job 1. 21. *As he came*, ſaith the *Preacher*, ſo
27. 19. *ſhall he go; and what profit* (then)
1 Tim. 6. 7. *hath he that laboureth for the wind?*
Eccl. 5. 21. From hence, that we muſt ſo ſoon
part with riches, he infers them to
be but wind; a thing not any-wiſe
to be fixed or ſetled; which 'tis vain
to think we can appropriate, or re-
tain; and vain therefore greedily to
covet or purſue: So the *Pſalmiſt*
Pſal. 39. 6. alſo reaſons it: *Surely, every man*
(ſaith he) *walketh in a vain ſhew;*
ſurely they are diſquieted in vain; he
heapeth up riches, and knoweth not
who ſhall gather them. Men, in his
accompt, that troubled themſelves
in accumulating Wealth, did but
idly delude themſelves, fanſying to
receive content from ſuch things,
which they muſt themſelves ſoon
be ſeparated from; and leave at
uncertainties, to be diſpoſed of they
know

now not how: That which in his wiſe Son's eſteem was ſufficient to make *a man hate all his labour under the Sun: Becauſe*, ſaith he, *I ſhall leave it to the man that ſhall be after me, and who knoweth, whether he ſhall be a wiſe man or a fool? yet he ſhall have rule over all my labour, wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have ſhewed my ſelf wiſe under the Sun:* All, it ſeems, that we are ſo wiſe, and ſo induſtrious about; that we ſo beat our heads about, and ſpend our ſpirits upon, is at moſt but *gaudium hæredis*; *the joy of an heir*, and that an uncertain one (for your Son, your Kinſman, your Friend may for all you can know die before you, or ſoon after you) 'tis but a being at great pains and charges in tilling the Land, and ſowing and dreſſing it; whence we are ſure not to reap any benefit to our ſelves, and cannot know who ſhall do it. Eccl. 2. 18.

In his elaborant, quæ ſciunt nihil omnino ad ſe pertinere; ſerunt arbores, quæ alteri ſeculo proſint. Cic. *de Senect.*

Jam. 1. 11. *The rich man* (St. *James* tells us) *as the flower of the grass shall he pass away; for the Sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion therof perisheth; So also shall the rich man fade in his ways*; all the comfort (we see by the *Apostles* discourse) and the convenience, all the grace and ornament that riches are supposed to yeild will certainly wither and decay, either before, or with us; whenever the Sun (that is, either some extream mischance in life, or the certain destiny of death) doth arise, and make impression on them. But our *Saviour* hath best set out the nature and condition of these things in that *Parable* concerning the man, who having had a plentifull crop of Corn, and having projected for the disposal of it, resolved then *to bless himself*, and entertain his mind with pleasing discourses, that having, in readiness and security, so copious accom-

Luke 12. 20.

moda-

modations, he might now enjoy himself with full satisfaction and delight; not considering, that though his Barns were full, his Life was not sure; that God's Pleasure might soon interrupt his Pass-time; that the fearfull sentence might presently be pronounced: *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee, and what thou hast prepared, to whom shall it fall?* *Euripides* calls riches φιλόψυχον χρῆμα, *a thing which much endears life*; or makes men greatly love it; but they do not at all enable to keep it: There is no ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς, *no* price, or *ransome equivalent to life*; *all that a man hath, he would give* to redeem it, but it is a Purchase too dear for all the riches in the World to compass; so the *Psalmist* tells us, *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransome for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious:* They cannot re- Τιμὴ ἔσαι. Psal. 49.

deem their Brother's ſoul, or life; nor therefore their own; for all ſouls are of the ſame value, all greatly ſurpaſs the price of gold and ſilver.

Luke 12. 20. Life was not given us for perpetuity, but lent, or depoſited with us; And without delay or evaſion it muſt be reſigned into the hand of its juſt Owner, when he ſhall pleaſe to demand it; and although righteouſneſs may, *yet riches* (as the

Prov. 11. 4. *Wiſeman* tells us) *cannot deliver from death, nor at all profit us in the day of wrath.* Could we probably retain our Poſſeſſions for ever in our hands; nay, could we certainly foreſee ſome conſiderable long definite time, in which we might enjoy our ſtores, it were perhaps ſomewhat excuſable to ſcrape and hoard, it might look like rational Providence, it might yield ſome valuable ſatisfaction; but ſince, *Rape, congere, aufer, poſſide, ſtatim relinquendum eſt*; ſince, as *Solomon* tells

Prov. 27. 24. us, *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to every generation*

yea

yea, ſince they muſt be left very ſoon, nor is there any certainty of keeping them any time; that one day may conſume them; one night may diſpoſſeſs us of them, and our life together with them; there can be no reaſon why we ſhould be ſolicitous about them; no accompt given of our ſetting ſo high a rate upon them. For who would much regard the having cuſtody of a rich treaſure for a day or two, then to be ſtripped of all, and left bare? To be to day inveſted in large domains, and to morrow to be diſpoſſeſs'd of them? No Man ſurely would be ſo fond, as much to affect the condition. Yet this is our caſe; whatever we call ours, we are but guardians thereof for a few days. Sen. *Ep.* 98. This conſideration therefore may ſerve to repreſs, or moderate in us all covetous deſires, proud conceits, vain confidences and ſatisfactions in reſpect to worldly Wealth, to induce us (in *Job*'s language) *not to make gold our hope, nor to ſay to the* Job 31. 24.

fine gold, thou art my confidence; not to rejoyce becauſe our wealth is great, and becauſe our hand hath gotten much; to extirpate from our hearts that root of all evil, the love of Money. For if, as the *Preacher* thought, the greateſt pleaſure or benefit accruing from them, is but looking upon them for a while, (*what good*, ſaith he, *is there to the owners thereof, ſaving the beholding of them with their eyes?*) if a little will, nay muſt ſuffice our natural appetites, and our preſent neceſſities; if more than needs, is but (as the Scripture teaches us) *a trouble* diſquieting our minds with care; *a* dangerous *ſnare*, drawing us into miſchief and ſorrow; if this, I ſay, be their preſent quality; and were it better, yet could it laſt for any certain, or any long continuance, is it not evidently better to enjoy that pittance God hath allotted us with eaſe and contentation of mind; or if we want a neceſſary ſupply, to employ onely a moderate diligence in

Eccl. 5. 11.

Eccl. 5. 12.
1 Tim. 6. 9.

Simplici cura conſtant neceſſaria, in delicias laboratur. Sen. Ep 89.
Matth. 6.

in getting thereof by the faireſt means, which with God's bleſſing promiſed thereto, will never fail to procure a competence, and with this to reſt content; than with thoſe in *Amos*, *to pant after the duſt of the earth*; *to lade our ſelves with thick clay*; to thirſt inſatiably after flouds of gold, to heap up mountains of treaſure, to extend unmeaſurably our poſſeſſions, (*joining houſe to houſe, and laying field to field, till there be no place, that we may be placed alone in the midſt of the earth*; as the Prophet *Eſay* doth excellently deſcribe the covetous Man's humour) than, I ſay, thus inceſſantly to toil for the maintenance of this frail body, this flitting breath of ours? If Divine Bounty hath freely imparted a plentifull eſtate upon us, we ſhould indeed bleſs God for it; *making our ſelves friends* thereby (as our Saviour adviſes us) employing it to God's Praiſe and Service; to the relief and comfort of our Brethren that need; but to ſeek

Heb. 13. 15. 1 Tim. 6. 8. Pſal. 55. 26.

Amos 2. 6. Hab. 2. 6.

Iſa. 5. 8.

Luke 16. 9.

it earneſtly, to ſet our heart upon it, to relye thereon; to be greatly pleaſed or elevated in mind thereby, as it argues much infidelity and profaneneſs of heart, ſo it ſignifies much inconſiderateneſs and folly, the ignorance of its nature, the forgetfulneſs of our own condition, upon the grounds diſcourſed upon.

3. Now, in the next place; for Pleaſure, that great Witch, which ſo enchants the World, and which by its miſchievous Baits ſo allures Mankind into ſin and miſery; although this conſideration be not altogether neceſſary to diſparage it (its own nature ſufficing to that; for it is more tranſitory than the ſhorteſt life, it dyes in the very enjoyment) yet it may conduce to our wiſe and good practice in reſpect thereto, by tempering the ſweetneſs thereof, yea ſouring its reliſh to us; minding us of its inſufficiency and unſerviceableneſs to the felicity of a mortal creature; yea, its extreamly dangerous conſequences to a ſoul, that

muſt ſurvive the ſhort enjoyment thereof. Some perſons indeed, ignorant or incredulous of a future eſtate; preſuming of no ſenſe remaining after death, nor regarding any accompt to be rendred of this life's actions, have encouraged themſelves, and others in the free enjoyment of preſent ſenſualities, upon the ſcore of our life's ſhortneſs and uncertainty; inculcating ſuch *Maxims* as theſe:

—Brevis eſt hic fructus homullis;
—poſt mortem nulla voluptas.

Lucr.

Quem fors dierum cunque dabit, Appone, nec dulces amores [lucro Sperne puer, &c.

Hor. *l.* 9.

Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall dye; becauſe our life is ſhort, let us make the moſt advantageous uſe thereof we can; becauſe death is uncertain, let us prevent its ſurpriſal, and be beforehand with it, enjoying ſomewhat, before it ſnatches all from us. The Authour of *Wiſedom* obſerveth, and thus repreſents theſe Mens diſcourſe: *Our life is* Sap. 2. 1, *&c.*

1 Cor. 15. 32.

ſhort and tedious; and in the death of a man there is no remedy; neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave: — Come on, therefore let us enjoy the good things that are preſent; let us ſpeedily uſe the creatures like as in youth; let us fill our ſelves with coſtly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the ſpring paſs by us; let us crown our ſelves with roſe-buds before they be withered; let none of us go without his part of voluptuouſneſs---for this is our portion, and our lot is this. Thus, and no wonder, have ſome men conceiving themſelves beaſts, reſolved to live as ſuch; renouncing all ſober care becoming men, and drowning their reaſon in brutiſh ſenſualities; yet no queſtion, the very ſame reflexion, that this life would ſoon paſs away, and that death might ſpeedily attack them, did not a little quaſh their mirth, and damp their pleaſure. To think, that this perhaps might be the laſt Banquet they ſhould taſte of; that they

they ſhould themſelves ſhortly become the feaſt of Worms and Serpents; could not but ſomewhat ſpoil the guſt of their higheſt delicacies, and diſturb the ſport of their loudeſt jovialties; but, in *Job*'s expreſſion, *make the meat in their bowels to turn, and be as the gall of Aſps within them.* Thoſe cuſtomary enjoyments did ſo enamour them of ſenſual delight, that they could not without pungent regret imagine a neceſſity of ſoon for ever parting with them; and ſo their very Pleaſure was by this thought made diſtaſtfull and embittered to them. So did the *Wiſeman* obſerve: *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at reſt in his poſſeſſions; unto the man that hath nothing to vex him; and that hath proſperity in all things; Yea* adds he *unto him that is yet able to receive meat:* And how bitter then muſt the remembrance thereof be to him, who walloweth in all kind of corporal ſatisfaction and delight; that placeth all

Job 20. 14.

Ecclus 41. 1.

all his happineſs in ſenſual enjoyment? However, as to us, who are better inſtructed and affected; who know and believe a future ſtate; the conſideration, that the time of enjoying theſe delights will ſoon be over; that this World's jollity is
Eccleſ. 7. 6. but like *the crackling of thorns under a pot* (which yields a brisk ſound, and a chearfull blaze, but heats little, and inſtantly paſſes away) that they leave no good fruits behind them, but do onely corrupt and enervate our minds; war againſt, and hurt our ſouls; tempt us to ſin, and involve us in guilt; that therefore *Solomon* was ſurely in the right, when
Eccl. 2 2. he ſaid of *laughter*, that *it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it?* (that is, that the higheſt of theſe delights are very irrational impertinences) and of intemperance; that, at the
Prov. 23 32. laſt, *it biteth like a Serpent, and ſtingeth like an Adder*; with us, I ſay, who reflect thus, that (πρόσκαιρος ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσις)
Heb. 11. 25. *enjoyment of ſinfull pleaſure for a ſeaſon*

cannot

cannot obtain much esteem and love; but will rather, I hope, be despised and abhorred by us. I will add onely

4. Concerning secular Wisedom and Knowledge; the which Men do also commonly with great earnestness and ambition seek after, as the most specious ornament, and pure content of their mind; this consideration doth also detect the just value thereof; so as to allay intemperate ardour toward it, pride and conceitedness upon the having, or seeming to have it, envy and emulation about it. For, imagine, if you please, a Man accomplished with all varieties of learning commendable, able to recompt all the stories that have been ever written (or the deeds acted) since the World's beginning; to understand, or with the most delightfull fluency and elegancy to speak all the languages that have at any time been in use among the sons of men; skil-

Δ-κεῖ γὰν ἡ σοφία θαυμαστὰς ἡδονὰς ἔχειν καθαριότητι, καὶ τῷ βεβαίῳ. Arist. *Eth.* X 7.

skilfull in twisting and untwisting all kinds of subtilties; versed in all sorts of natural experiments, and ready to assign plausible conjectures about the causes of them; studied in all Books whatever, and in all Monuments of Antiquity; deeply knowing in all the mysteries of art, or science, or policy, such as have ever been devised by humane wit, or study or observation; yet all this, such is the pity, he must be forced presently to abandon; all the use he could make of all his notions, the pleasure he might find in them, the reputation accruing to him from them must at that fatal minute vanish; *his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisedom in the grave, whither he goeth.* 'Tis seen (saith the *Psalmist*, seen indeed every day, and observed by all) *that wise men dye, likewise the fool and brutish person perisheth; one event happeneth to them both; there*

Psal. 46. 4. Eccl. 9. 10.

Psal. 49. 10. Eccl. 2. 14, 15, &c.

is

is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; (both dye alike, both alike are forgotten) as the wisest man himself, did (not without some distast) observe and complain. All our subtile conceits, and nice criticisms; all our fine inventions and goodly speculations shall be swallowed up either in the utter darkness, or in the clearer light of the future state. One Potion of that *Lethean* cup (which we must all take down upon our entrance into that *land of forgetfulness*) will probably drown the memory, deface the shape of all those *Idea's*, with which we have here stuffed our minds; however they are not like to be of use to us in that new, so different, state; where none of our languages are spoken; none of our experience will suit; where all things have quite another face unknown, unthought of by us. Where *Aristotle*

Psal. 88. 12.

Τὺν δ' Ἰσοκράτους διατριβὴν ὀπίσκωπτων, γηρᾶν φησι παρ' αὐτῷ τοὺς μαθητὰς, ὡς ἐν ᾅδου χρησομένους τὴν τέχναις, καὶ δίκας ἐροῦντας. Cato Sen. *apud* Plut. *pag.* 641.

ſtotle, and *Varro* ſhall appear mere Idiots; *Demoſthenes* and *Cicero* ſhall become very infants; the wiſeſt and eloquenteſt *Greeks* will prove ſenſeleſs and dumb *Barbarians*; where all our Authours ſhall have no authority; where we muſt all go freſh to ſchool again; muſt unlearn perhaps, what in theſe miſty regions we thought our ſelves beſt to know; and begin to learn, what we not once ever dream'd of; Doth therefore, I pray you, ſo tranſitory and fruitleſs a good (for it ſelf I mean and excepting our duty to God, or the reaſonable diligence we are bound to uſe in our calling) deſerve ſuch anxious deſire, or ſo reſtleſs toil; ſo carefull attention of mind, or aſſiduous pain of body about it? Doth it become us to contend, or emulate ſo much about it? Above all do we not moſt unreaſonably, and againſt the nature of the thing it ſelf we pretend to (that is, ignorantly and fooliſhly) if we are proud and conceited, much value

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our ſelves or contemn others, in reſpect thereto? *Solomon* the moſt experienc'd in this matter, and beſt able to judge thereof (He that gave his heart to ſeek and ſearch out by wiſedom concerning all things that had been done under Heaven, and this with extream ſucceſs; even he) paſſeth the ſame ſentence of vanity, vexation and unprofitableneſs, upon this, as upon all other ſubceleſtial things. True, he commends wiſedom as an excellent and uſefull thing comparatively; *exceeding folly, ſo far as light exceedeth darkneſs*; But ſince light it ſelf is not permanent, but muſt give way to darkneſs, the difference ſoon vaniſhed; and his opinion thereof abated; conſidering, that as it happened to the fool, ſo it happened to him, he breaks into that expoſtulation: *And why then was I more wiſe?* to what purpoſe was ſuch a diſtinction made, that ſignified in effect ſo little? And indeed the Teſtimony of this great perſonage may ſerve for a good *Epilogue*

Διπλῶν ὁρᾶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γεγράμματα. Eccl. 2. 15.

to

to all this diſcourſe, diſcovering ſufficiently the ſlender worth of all earthly things: Seeing he, that had given himſelf induſtriouſly to experiment the worth of all things here below, to ſound the depth of their utmoſt perfection and uſe; who had all the advantages imaginable of performing it: Who flouriſhed in the greateſt magnificences of worldly pomp and power; who enjoyed an incredible affluence of all riches; who taſted all varieties of moſt exquiſite pleaſure; whoſe heart was (by God's ſpecial gift, and by his own induſtrious care) enlarged with all kind of knowledge (furniſhed with notions many *as the ſand upon the ſea ſhore*) above all that were before him; who had poſſeſſed and enjoyed all that fancy could conceive, or heart could wiſh, and had arrived to the top of ſecular Happineſs; Yet even *He* with pathetical reiteration pronounces all to be *vanity and vexation of ſpirit*; altogether unprofitable and unſatisfactory

1 Kings 4. 29.

ctory to the mind of Man. And ſo therefore we may juſtly conclude them to be; ſo finiſhing the firſt grand advantage this preſent conſideration affordeth us in order to that wiſedom, to which we ſhould apply our hearts.

I ſhould proceed to gather other good fruits, which it is apt to produce and contribute to the ſame purpoſe; but ſince my thoughts have taken ſo large ſcope upon that former head, ſo that I have already too much, I fear, exerciſed your patience, I ſhall onely mention the reſt. As this conſideration doth, as we have ſeen, Firſt, diſpoſe us rightly to value theſe temporal goods, and moderate our affections about them; ſo it doth, Secondly, in like manner, conduce to the right eſtimation of temporal evils; and thereby to the well tempering our paſſions, in the reſentment of them; to the begetting of patience and contentedneſs in our minds. Alſo, Thirdly, it may

help us to value, and excite us to regard thoſe things (good or evil) which relate to our future ſtate; being the things onely of a permanent nature, and of an everlaſting conſequence to us. Fourthly, It will engage us to husband carefully and well employ this ſhort time of our preſent life: Not to defer or procraſtinate our endeavours to live well; not to be lazy and loitering in the diſpatch of our onely conſiderable buſineſs, relating to eternity; to embrace all opportunities, and improve all means; and follow the beſt *compendiums* of good practice leading to eternal bliſs. Fifthly, It will be apt to confer much toward the begetting and preſerving ſincerity in our thoughts, words and actions; cauſing us to decline all oblique deſigns upon preſent mean intereſts, or baſe regards to the opinions or affections of men: bearing ſingle reſpects to our conſcience and duty in our actions; Teaching us to ſpeak as we mean; and be what

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we would ſeem; to be in our hearts and in our cloſets, what we appear in our outward expreſſions and converſations with Men; For conſidering, that within a very ſhort time all the thoughts of our hearts ſhall be diſcloſed; and all the actions of our lives expoſed to publick view (being ſtrictly to be examined at the great bar of divine judgment before Angels and Men) we cannot but perceive it to be the greateſt folly in the World, for this ſhort preſent time to diſguiſe our ſelves; to conceal our intentions, or ſmother our actions. What hath occurred (upon theſe important ſubjects) to my meditation, I muſt at preſent, in regard to your patience, omit. I ſhall cloſe all with that good *Collect* of our Church.

Almighty God, give us grace, that we may caſt away the works of darkneſs, and put upon us the armour of light now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jeſus Chriſt

came to viſit us in great humility; that in the laſt day, when he ſhall come again in his glorious Majeſty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may riſe to the life immortal, through him, who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the Holy Ghoſt, now and ever. Amen.

SER-

SERMON II.

The Conſideration of our latter End.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.

IN diſcourſing formerly upon theſe words (expounded according to the moſt common and paſſable interpretation) that which I chiefly obſerved was this: That the ſerious conſideration of the ſhortneſs and frailty of our life is a fit mean or rational inſtrument ſubſervient to the bringing our hearts to

Job 14. 14. *All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*

wisedom; that is, to the making us discern, attend unto, embrace and prosecute such things as, according to the dictates of right reason, are truly best for us.

I. The truth of which observation I largely declared from hence, that the said consideration disposeth us to judge rightly about those goods (which ordinarily court and tempt us, *viz.* worldly glory and honour; riches, pleasure, knowledge; to which I might have added wit, strength and beauty) what their just worth and value is; and consequently to moderate our affections, our cares, our endeavours about them; for that if all those goods be uncertain and transitory, there can be no great reason to prize them much, or to affect them vehemently, or to spend much care and pain about them.

II. I shall next in the same scales weigh our temporal evils; and say, that

that alſo, The conſideration of our lives brevity and frailty doth avail to the paſſing a true judgment of, and conſequently to the governing our paſſions, and ordering our behaviour in reſpect to all thoſe temporal evils, which either according to the Law of our nature, or the fortuitous courſe of things, or the particular diſpenſation of providence do befall us. Upon the declaration of which point I need not inſiſt much, ſince what was before diſcourſed concerning the oppoſite goods doth plainly enough infer it; more immediately indeed in regard to the *mala damni*, or *privationis*, (the evils, which conſiſt onely in the want, or loſs of temporal goods) but ſufficiently alſo by a manifeſt parity of reaſon in reſpect to the *mala ſenſus*, the real pains, croſſes and inconveniences, that aſſail us in this life. For if worldly glory do hence appear to be no more than a tranſient blaze, a fading ſhew, a hollow ſound, a piece of theatrical pageantry,

try, the want thereof cannot be very conſiderable to us. Obſcurity of condition (living in a valley beneath that dangerous height, and deceitfull luſtre) cannot in reaſon be deemed a very ſad or pitifull thing; which ſhould diſpleaſe, or diſcompoſe us; if we may thence learn that abundant wealth is rather a needleſs clog, or a perillous ſnare, than any great convenience to us; we cannot well eſteem to be poor a great infelicity, or to undergo loſſes a grievous calamity; but rather a benefit to be free from the diſtractions that attend it; to have little to keep for others, little to care for our ſelves. If theſe preſent pleaſures be diſcerned hence to be onely wild fugitive dreams; out of which being ſoon rouſed we ſhall onely find bitter regrets to abide; why ſhould not the wanting opportunities of enjoying them be rather accompted a happy advantage, than any part of miſery to us? If it ſeem, that the greateſt perfection of curious knowledge (of what

what uſe or ornament ſoever) after it is hardly purchaſed, muſt ſoon be parted with; to be ſimple or ignorant will be no great matter of lamentation; as thoſe will appear no ſolid goods, ſo theſe conſequently muſt be onely *umbræ malorum*, phantaſms, or ſhadows of evil, rather than truly or ſubſtantially ſo; (evils created by fancy and ſubſiſting thereby; which reaſon ſhould, and time will ſurely remove.) That in being impatient or diſconſolate for them, we are but like children, that fret and wail for the want of petty toys. And for the more real or poſitive evils, ſuch as violently aſſault nature, whoſe impreſſions no reaſon can ſo withſtand, as to diſtinguiſh all diſtaſt or afflictive ſenſe of them; yet this conſideration will aid to abate and aſſwage them; affording a certain hope and proſpect of approaching redreſs. It is often ſeen at Sea, that Men (from unacquaintance with ſuch agitations, or from brackiſh ſteams ariſing from the ſalt Water) are heavily Sen. *Ep.* 89.

heartily ſick, and diſcover themſelves to be ſo by apparently grievous ſymptoms; yet no man hardly there doth mind or pity them, becauſe the malady is not ſuppoſed dangerous, and within a while will probably of it ſelf paſs over; or that however, the remedy is not far off; the ſight of Land, a taſt of the freſh Air will relieve them: 'Tis near our Caſe: We paſſing over this troubleſome Sea of life: from unexperience, joined with the tenderneſs of our conſtitution, we cannot well endure the changes and croſſes of fortune; to be toſſed up and down; to ſuck in the ſharp vapours of penury, diſgrace, ſickneſs, and the like, doth beget a qualm in our ſtomachs; make us nauſeate all things, and appear ſorely diſtempered; yet is not our condition ſo diſmal, as it ſeems; we may grow hardier, and wear out our ſenſe of affliction; however, the Land is not far off, and by diſembarking hence, we ſhall ſuddenly be diſcharged of

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all our moleſtations. Tis a common ſolace of grief, approved by wiſe men, *ſi gravis, brevis eſt ; ſi longus, levis* ; if it be very grievous and acute, it cannot continue long, without intermiſſion or reſpit ; if it abide long, it is ſupportable ; intolerable pain is like lightening, it deſtroys us, or is it ſelf inſtantly deſtroyed. However, death at length (which never is far off) will free us ; be we never ſo much toſſed with ſtorms of misfortune, that is a ſure haven ; be we perſecuted with never ſo many enemies, that is a ſafe refuge ; let what pains or diſeaſes ſoever infeſt us, that is an aſſured *Anodynon*, and infallible remedy for them all ; however we be wearied with the labours of the day, the night will come and eaſe us ; the grave will become a bed of reſt unto us.

Θάρσει· πάνυ γὰρ ἄκρον οὐκ ἔχει κέντρον.

Τὸ μὲν ἀφόρητον ὀξέως· τὸ δὲ χρονιζον φορητόν. Ant. *VII. Sect.* 33.

Summi doloris intentio invenit finem : nemo poteſt valde dolere, & diu : ſic nos amantiſſima noſtri natura diſpoſuit, ut dolorem aut tolerabilem, aut brevem faceret. Sen. *Ep.* 24.

Dolore perculſi mortem imploramus, eamque unam, ut miſeriarum malorumque terminum, exoptamus. Cic. *conſ.*

Moriar? hoc dicis ; deſinam ægrotare poſſe, &c. Sen.

us. Shall I dye? I shall then cease to be sick; I shall be exempted from disgrace; I shall be enlarged from prison; I shall be no more pinched with want; no more tormented with pain. Death is a Winter, that as it withers the Rose and Lily, so it kills the Nettle and Thistle; as it stifles all worldly joy and pleasure, so it suppresses all care and grief; as it hushes the voice of mirth and melody, so it stills the clamours, and the sighs of misery; as it defaces all the World's glory, so it covers all disgrace, wipes off all tears, silences all complaint, buries all disquiet and discontent. King *Philip* of *Macedon* once threatned the *Spartans* to vex them sorely, and bring them into great straits; but, answered they, *can he hinder us from dying*; that indeed is a way of evading, which no enemy can obstruct, no Tyrant can debar Men from; they who can deprive of life, and its conveniences, cannot take away death from them. There is a place,

Ἄδην ἔχων βοηθὸν, οὐ τρέμω σκιάς. *Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest; At nemo mortem.* Sen. *Trag.*

Job

Job tells us, *where the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and where the weary be at reſt; where the priſoners reſt together; they hear not the voice of the oppreſſour; the ſmall and great are there; and the ſervant is free from his Maſter.* 'Tis therefore but holding out a while, and a deliverance from the worſt this World can moleſt us with, ſhall of its own accord arrive unto us; in the mean time 'tis better that we at preſent owe the benefit of our comfort to reaſon, than afterward to time; by rational conſideration to work patience and contentment in our ſelves; and to uſe the ſhortneſs of our life as an argument to ſuſtain us in our affliction, than to find the end thereof onely a natural and neceſſary means of our reſcue from it. The contemplation of this cannot fail to yield ſomething of courage and ſolace to us in the greateſt preſſures; theſe tranſient, and ſhort-liv'd evils, if we conſider them as ſo, cannot appear ſuch horrid bugbears, as much to affright

Job 3. 17.

Ὁ μέλλεις τῷ χρόνῳ χαρίζεσθαι, τοῦτο χαρίζεσθαι τῷ λόγῳ. Plut. *ad* Apol. *p.* 195.

Omnia brevia tolerabilia eſſe debent, etiamſi magna. Cic. Læl. *ad fin.*

or

or diſmay us; if we remember how ſhort they are, we cannot eſteem them ſo great, or ſo intolerable. There be, I muſt confeſs, divers more noble conſiderations, proper and available to cure diſcontent and impatience. The conſidering, that all theſe evils proceed from God's juſt will, and wiſe providence; unto which it is fit, and we upon all accompts are obliged readily to ſubmit; that they do ordinarily come from God's goodneſs, and gratious deſign towards us; that they are medicines (although ungratefull, yet wholſome) adminiſtred by the Divine Wiſedom, to prevent, remove or abate our diſtempers of ſoul (to allay the tumours of pride, to cool the fevers of intemperate deſire; to rouſe us from the lethargy of ſloath; to ſtop the gangrene of bad conſcience) that they are fatherly corrections, intended to reclaim us from ſin, and excite us to duty; that they ſerve as inſtruments or occaſions to exerciſe, to try, to refine our vertue;

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to beget in us the hope, to qualifie us for the reception of better rewards; ſuch diſcourſes indeed are of a better nature, and have a more excellent kind of efficacy: yet no fit help, no good art, no juſt weapon is to be quite neglected in the combat againſt our ſpiritual foes. A Pebble-ſtone hath been ſometimes found more convenient than a Sword or a Spear to ſlay a Giant. Baſer remedies (by reaſon of the Patient's conſtitution, or circumſtances) do ſometime produce good effect, when others in their own nature more rich and potent want efficacy. And ſurely frequent reflexions upon our mortality, and living under the ſenſe of our life's frailty cannot but conduce ſomewhat to the begetting in us an indifferency of mind toward all theſe temporal occurents: to extenuate both the goods and the evils we here meet with; conſequently therefore to compoſe and calm our paſſions about them.

III. But

III. But I proceed to another uſe of that conſideration we ſpeak of emergent from the former, but ſo as to improve it to higher purpoſes. For ſince it is uſefull to the diminiſhing our admiration of theſe worldly things, to the withdrawing our affections from them, to the ſlackning our endeavours about them; it will follow that it muſt conduce alſo to beget an eſteem, a deſire, a proſecution of things conducing to our future welfare; both by removing the obſtacles of doing ſo, and by engaging us to conſider the importance of thoſe things in compariſon with theſe. By removing obſtacles I ſay; for while our hearts are poſſeſſed with regard and paſſion toward theſe preſent things, there can be no room left in them for reſpect and affection toward things future. 'Tis in our ſoul as in the reſt of nature; there can be no penetration of objects (as it were) in our hearts, nor any vacuity in them;

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our mind no more than our body can be in ſeveral places, or tend ſeveral ways, or abide in perfect reſt; yet ſome-where it will always be; ſome-whither it will always go; ſome-what it will ever be doing. If we *have a treaſure* here (ſome-what we greatly like and much confide in) *our hearts will be here* with it; and if here, they cannot be otherwhere; they will be taken up; they will reſt ſatisfied; they will not care to ſeek farther. If we affect worldly glory and delight in the applauſe of men, we ſhall not be ſo carefull to pleaſe God, and ſeek his favour. If we admire and repoſe confidence in riches, it will make us neglectfull of God, and diſtruſtfull of his Providence; if our mind thirſts after, and ſucks in greedily ſenſual pleaſures, we ſhall not reliſh ſpiritual delights, attending the practice of vertue and piety, or ariſing from good conſcience; adhering to, attending upon Maſters of ſo different, ſo oppoſite a quality

Matth. 6. 21.

John 5. 44. 12. 43. Matth. 6. 24.

Rom. 8. 5.

is inconsistent; they cannot abide peaceably together, they cannot both rule in our narrow breasts; we shall love and hold to the one; hate and despise the other. *If any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him*; the love of the World, as the present guest, so occupies and fills the room; that it will not admit, cannot hold the love of God. But when the heart is discharged and emptied of these things; when we begin to despise them as base and vain; to distast them as insipid and unsavoury; then naturally will succeed a desire after other things promising a more solid content; and desire will breed endeavour; and endeavour (furthered by God's assistence always ready to back it) will yeild such a glimps and taste of those things, as will so comfort and satisfie our minds, that thereby they will be drawn and engaged into a more earnest prosecution of them. When (I say) driving on ambitious Projects, heaping

1 John 2. 15.

ing up Wealth, providing for the flesh (by our reflecting on the shortness and frailty of our life) become so insipid to us, that we find little appetite to them, or relish in them; our restless minds will begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness, desiring some satisfaction thence: Discerning these secular and carnal fruitions to be mere *husks* (the proper food of swine) we shall bethink our selves of that better nourishment (of rational or spiritual comfort) which our Fathers house doth afford to his children and servants. Being somewhat disentangled from the care of our farms and our trafficks; from yoaking our oxen and being married to our present delights; we may be at leisure, and in disposition to comply with divine invitations to entertainments spiritual. Experiencing, that our trade about these petty commodities turns to small accompt, and that in the end we shall be nothing richer thereby; reason will induce us

Luke 22. 5.

Matth. 22. 5.

with the Merchant in the Gospel *to*
Matth. 13. 46. *sell all that we have* (to forego our present interests and designs) for the purchasing that *rich Pearl* of God's Kingdom, which will yeild so exceeding profit; the gain of present comfort to our conscience, and eternal happiness to our souls. In fine, when we consider seriously,
Heb. 13. 14. 1 Pet. 2. 11. that *we have here no abiding City*, but are onely *sojourners and pilgrims upon Earth*; that all our care and pain here do regard onely an uncertain and transitory state; and will therefore suddenly as to all fruit and benefit be lost unto us; this will suggest unto us, with the good Patriarchs, κρείττονος ὀρέγεσθαι πατρίδος,
Heb. 11. 16. *to long after a better Countrey*; a more assured, and lasting state of life; where we may enjoy some certain and durable repose; to tend homeward, in our desires and hopes, toward those eternal Mansions of joy and rest prepared for God's faithfull Servants in Heaven. Thus will this consideration help toward the bring-

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ing us to inquire after and regard the things concerning our future ſtate; and in the reſult will engage us to compare them with theſe preſent things, as to our concernment in them and the conſequence of them to our advantage or damage, whence a right judgment, and a congruous practice will naturally follow. There be four ways of comparing the things relating to this preſent life with thoſe which reſpect our future ſtate: Comparing the goods of this with the goods of that; the evils of this with the evils of that; the goods of this with the evils of that; the evils of this with the goods of that. All theſe compariſons we may find often made in Scripture; in order to the informing our judgment about the reſpective value of both ſorts; the preſent conſideration intervening, as a ſtandard to meaſure and try them by.

Firſt then; comparing the preſent goods with thoſe which concern our future ſtate, ſince the tran-

ſitorineſs and uncertainty of temporal goods detract from their worth, and render them in great degree contemptible; but the durability and certainty of ſpiritual goods doth encreaſe their rate, and make them exceedingly valuable; 'tis evident hence, that ſpiritual goods are infinitely to be preferred in our opinion, to be more willingly embraced, to be more zealouſly purſued than temporal goods, that in caſe of competition, when both cannot be enjoyed, we are in reaſon obliged readily to part with all theſe, rather than to forfeit our title unto, or hazard our hope of thoſe. Thus in the Scripture it is often diſcourſed:

1 John 2. 17. *The world* (ſaith St. *John*) *paſſeth away, and the deſire thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever:* The World, and all that is deſirable therein is tranſient; but obedience to God's commandments is of an everlaſting conſequence; whence he infers, that we ſhould *not love the world*; that is, not entertain

tertain ſuch an affection thereto, as may any way prejudice the love of God, or hinder the obedience ſpringing thence, or ſuitable thereto.

All fleſh is graſs (ſaith St. *Peter*) *and all the glory of man as the flower of the graſs; the graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever:* All worldly glory is frail and fading, but the Word of God is eternally firm and permanent; that is, the good things by God promiſed to them, who faithfully ſerve him, ſhall infallibly be conferred on them to their everlaſting benefit; whence it follows, that as he exhorts, we are bound to gird up the loins of our mind, to be ſober, and hope to the end; to proceed and perſiſt conſtantly in faithfull obedience to God. *Charge thoſe* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *who are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God; that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to*

1 Pet. 1. 24.

v. 13.

1 Tim. 6. 19.

communicate; treaſuring up for themſelves a good foundation for the future; that they may attain everlaſting life: Since, argues he, preſent riches are of uncertain, and ſhort continuance; but faith and obedience to God, exerciſed in our charity and mercy toward men, are a certain ſtock improveable to our eternal intereſt; therefore be not proud of, nor relie upon thoſe, but regard eſpecially, and employ our ſelves upon theſe. Our Saviour himſelf doth often inſiſt upon, and inculcate this compariſon: *Treaſure not unto your ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt do corrupt; and where thieves break through and ſteal; but treaſure up to your ſelves treaſures in heaven, where moth and ruſt do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal. Do not take care for your ſoul, what ye ſhall eat, and what ye ſhall drink; nor for your body, what ye ſhall put on; but ſeek firſt the kingdom of God. Labour not for the food that periſheth, but for the food*

Matth. 6. 20.

v. 25.

John 6. 27.

food that abideth to eternal life; sell your substance, and give alms; provide your selves bags that wax not old; an indefectible treasure in the heavens: Thus doth the holy Scripture, setting forth the uncertainty and transitorinesse of the present, the certainty and permanency of future goods, declare the excellency of these above those; advising thereupon, with highest reason, that we willingly reject those (in real effect, if need be, however always in ready disposition of mind) in order to the procuring or securing of these. It also, for our example and encouragement, commends to us the wisedom and vertue of those Persons, who have effectually practised this duty: of *Abraham, our Father*, who, in expectation of that well-founded City, made and built by God, did readily desert his Countrey and Kindred, with all present accommodations of life; of *Moses*, who disregarded the splendors and delights of a great Court; rejected the alliance of

Luke 12. 33. Θησαυρὸν ἀνέκλειπτον.

Heb. 11. 10.

v. 23.

of a great Princeſs, and *refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter*; in reſpect to the μισθαποδοσία, that future diſtribution of reward; a ſhare wherein ſhall aſſuredly fall to them, who above all other conſiderations regard the performance of their duty to God, of the *Apoſtles*, who *forſook all*, Parents, Brethren, Lands, Houſes, Trades, receits of Cuſtome, to follow *Chriſt*; him at preſent poor, and naked of all ſecular honour, power, wealth and delight; in hope onely to receive from him divine benefits, and future preferments in his Kingdom; of *Mary*, who neglecting preſent affairs, and ſeating her ſelf at *Jeſus* his feet, attending to his diſcipline; is commended for her wiſedom, in minding the *onely neceſſary thing*; in chuſing *the better part, which could never be taken from her*: of St. *Paul*, who *accompted all his gains* (all his worldly intereſts and priviledges) *to be damage*, to be *dung in reſpect to Chriſt, and the excellent knowledge of him,*

Matth. 19. 27. Luke 18. 28.

Luke 10. 39.

Phil. 3. 7, 8.

him, with the benefits thence accruing to him. On the contrary there we have *Esau* condemned and stigmatized for *a profane* and a vain *person*, who (ἀντὶ μιᾶς βρώσεως) *for one little eating-bout*; one mess of Pottage (for a little present satisfaction of sense, or for the sustenance of this frail life) did withgo his birthright, that emblem of spiritual blessings and priviledges. We have again represented to us that unhappy young *Gentleman*; who, though he had good qualities, rendring him amiable even to our Saviour; and had been trained up in the observance of God's Commandments; yet not being content to part with his large Possessions, in lieu of the treasure by *Christ* offered in Heaven, was reputed deficient; could find no acceptance with God, nor admission into his Kingdom; for a petty temporal commodity forfeiting an infinite eternal advantage. For, saith our Saviour, *He that loveth father or mother above*

Heb. 12. 16.

Mark. 10. 18.

Matth. 10. 37.

Luke 14. 26. *love me; he that doth not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and ſiſters, yea his own life (for* Mark 10. 29. *me and the Goſpel) is not worthy of me, nor can be my diſciple.* He that in his eſteem or affection doth prefer any temporal advantages before the benefits tendered by our Saviour (yea doth not in compariſon deſpiſe, renounce and reject his dearest contents of life, and the very capacity of enjoying them, his life it ſelf) doth not deſerve to be reckoned among the Diſciples of *Chriſt*; to be ſo much as a Pretender to eternal joy, or a candidate of immortality. Our *Saviour* rejects all ſuch unwiſe and perverſe traders, who will not exchange brittle glaſs for ſolid gold; counterfeit gliſtering ſtones for genuine moſt pretious jewels; a garland of fading flowers for an incorruptible Crown of Glory; a ſmall temporary penſion for 1 Pet. 1. 4. a vaſtly rich freehold; *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in the hea-*

heavens. Thus doth the Holy Scripture teach us to compare theſe ſorts of good things;

And, ſecondly, ſo alſo doth it to compare the evils of both ſtates; for that ſeeing, as the ſoon ceaſing of temporal miſchiefs ſhould (in reaſonable proceeding) diminiſh the fear of them, and mitigate the grief for them; ſo the inceſſant continuance of ſpiritual evils doth (according to juſt eſtimation) render them hugely grievous and formidable; 'tis plain, that we ſhould much more diſlike, abominate, and ſhun ſpiritual evils, than temporal; that we ſhould make no queſtion rather to endure theſe paroxyſms of momentany pain, than incur thoſe chronical and (indeed) incurable maladies; that we ſhould run willingly into theſe ſhallow plaſhes of preſent inconvenience, rather than plunge our ſelves into thoſe unfathomable depths of eternal miſery. There is (I ſuppoſe) no man, who would not accompt it a very great calamity

Matth. 5. 29. 18. 8.

ty (ſuch as hardly greater could befall him here) to have *his right eye plucked out*, and *his right hand cut off*, and *his foot* taken from him; to be deformed and maimed, ſo that he can do nothing, or ſtir any whither; yet our Lord repreſents theſe to us as inconſiderable evils, yea as things very eligible and advantageous in compariſon of thoſe miſchiefs, which the voluntary not embracing them, in caſe we cannot otherwiſe than by ſo doing avoid ſin, will bring on us: συμφέρει σοι, *it is* (ſaith he) *profitable for thee, that one of thy members be loſt, rather than that thy whole body be caſt into hell*; καλόν σοι ἐστι, *'tis good*, 'tis excellent for thee *to enter into life lame and maimed, and one ey'd, rather than having two hands, and two feet, and two eyes* (in all integrity and beauty of this temporal, or corporal ſtate) *to be caſt into eternal fire.* To be baniſhed from ones native ſoil, ſecluded from all comforts of friendly acquaintance, deveſted irrecoverably of

of great eſtate and dignity; becoming a vagrant and a ſervant in vile employment, in a ſtrange Countrey, every Man would be apt to deem a wretched condition; yet *Moſes*, we ſee, freely choſe it, rather than by enjoying unlawfull pleaſures at home, in *Pharaoh's* Court, to incur God's diſpleaſure and vengeance: συγκακουχεῖσθαι μᾶλλον ἑλὼν, *chuſing rather to undergo evil together with God's people, than to have* πρόσκαιρον ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν, *a temporary fruition of ſinfull delight*, dangerous to the welfare of his ſoul. Death is commonly eſteemed the moſt extream and terrible of evils incident to man; yet our *Saviour* bids us not to regard or fear it, in compariſon of that deadly ruine, which we adventure on by offending God: *I ſay unto you my friends* (ſaith he, he intended it for the moſt friendly advice) *be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have nothing farther to do; but I will ſhew you whom ye ſhall fear; Fear him, who after*

Heb. 11. 25.

Luke 12. 4.
Matth. 10. 28.
Ἀποκτεῖναι δύνανται, βλάψαι δ' οὔ.

after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell; to caſt both body and ſoul into Hell, and deſtroy them therein; *Yea, I ſay unto you* (ſo he inculcates and impreſſes it upon them) *fear him.*

But thirdly; Conſidering the good things of this life together with the evils of that, which is to come; Since enjoying theſe goods in compariſon with enduring thoſe evils is but rejoicing for a moment in reſpect of mourning to eternity; if upon the ſeeming ſweetneſs of theſe enjoyments to our carnal appetite be conſequent a remedileſs diſtempering of our ſoul; ſo that what taſts like honey proves gall in the digeſtion; gripes our bowels, gnaws our heart, and ſtings our conſcience for ever; if preſent mirth and jollity have a tendency to that dreadfull weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth threatened in the Goſpel; if for the praiſe and favour of a few giddy men here we venture eternal ſhame and confuſion before God and

and Angels and all good men hereafter; if for attaining or preſerving a ſmall ſtock of uncertain riches in this World we ſhall reduce our ſelves into a ſtate of moſt uncomfortable nakedneſs and penury in the other. 'Tis clear as the Sun that we are downright fools and mad-men, if we do not upon theſe accompts rather willingly reject all theſe good things, than hazard incurring any of thoſe evils; for, ſaith truth it ſelf, *What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole World* (κ, ζημιωθῇ τὸν ψυχὸν) *and be endamaged as to his ſoul*, or loſe his ſoul as a mulct. 'Tis a very diſadvantageous bargain for all the conveniences this World can afford to be deprived of the comforts of our immortal ſtate. But, Mark 8. 36. Luke 9. 25.

Laſtly, comparing the evils of this life with the benefits of the future, ſince the worſt tempeſts of this life will be ſoon blown over, the bittereſt croſſes muſt expire (if not before, however) with our breath;

but the good things of the future ſtate are immutable and perpetual; 'tis in evident conſequence moſt reaſonable; that we freely (if need be) undertake, and patiently endure theſe for the ſake of thoſe; that in hope of that *incorruptible inheritance, laid up for us in Heaven*, we not only ſupport and comfort our ſelves, but even rejoice and exult in all the afflictions by God's wiſe and juſt diſpenſation impoſed on us here; as they in St. *Peter*; wherein (ſaith he) *ye greatly rejoice* (*or exult,*) *being for a little while as in heavineſs through manifold* * *afflictions or trials. Accompting it all joy* (ſaith St. *James*) *when ye fall into divers temptations* (that is afflictions or trials) *knowing that the trial of your faith perfecteth patience*; that is, ſeeing the ſufferance of theſe preſent evils conduceth to the furtherance of your ſpiritual and eternal welfare. And, *We glory in tribulation*, ſaith St. *Paul*; rendring the ſame accompt, becauſe it tended to their ſouls advantage:

Pet. 1. 4.

Ibid.
Ἀγαλλιᾶσθε ὀλίγον ἄρτι.

* Πειρασμοῖς.
James 1. 2.

Rom. 5. 8.

vantage: St. *Paul*, than whom no man perhaps ever more deeply taſted of the cup of affliction; and that tempered with all the moſt bitter ingredients which this World can produce; Whoſe life was ſpent in continual agitation and unſettledneſs; in all hardſhips of travel and labour and care; in extreme ſufferance of all pains both of body and mind; in all imaginable dangers and difficulties and diſtreſſes, that nature expoſes man unto, or humane malice can bring upon him; in all wants of natural comfort (food, ſleep, ſhelter, liberty, health) in all kinds of diſgrace and contumely; as you may ſee in thoſe large inventories of his ſufferings, regiſtred by himſelf, in the 6th and 11th *Chapters* of his 2d *Epiſtle* to the *Corinthians*; Yet all this conſidering the good things he expected afterward to enjoy, he accompted very ſlight and tolerable: *For* (ſaith he) *our lightneſs of affliction, that is for a little while here, worketh for us a far*

Ἐν ἀναπαυσίαις.

2 Cor. 11. 23. 6. 5.

2 Cor. 4. 17. 5. 1. Τὸ γὰρ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως.

a far more exceeding weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are ſeen; but at thoſe, which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen are temporal; but the things which are not ſeen are eternal. For we know, that when our earthly houſe of this tabernacle (of this unſteady tranſitory abode) *is diſſolved we are to have a tabernacle from God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal*
Rom. 8. 18. *in the Heavens. I reckon,* ſaith he again, (that is having made a due compariſon and computation I find) *that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy* (that is are not conſiderable, come under no rate or proportion) *in reſpect of the glory which ſhall be revealed* (or openly conferred) *upon us.* The like opinion had thoſe faithfull Chriſtians,
Heb. 10. 34. Θεατειζόμενοι. in the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, of whom 'tis ſaid, that *being expoſed to publick ſcorn as in a theatre, with reproaches and afflictions, they did*
Αρπαγήν. with gladneſs accept the ſpoiling * (or rapine) *of their goods; knowing that they*

they had in Heaven a better and more enduring ſubſtance. But the principal example (moſt obliging our imitation) of this wiſe choice is that of our *Lord* himſelf; who, in contemplation of the future great ſatisfaction and reward of patient ſubmiſſion to the divine will, did willingly undergo the greateſt of temporal ſorrows and ignominies; *Who* (ſaith the *Apoſtle to the Hebrews*, propounding his example to us) *for the joy that was ſet before him endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of God.* Heb. 12. 2.

Thus immediately, or by an eaſie inference doth the conſideration of this lifes ſhortneſs and uncertainty confer to that main part of wiſedom, rightly to value the things about which we are converſant; diſpoſing us conſequently to moderate our affections, and rightly to guide our actions about them; fitting us therefore for the performance of thoſe duties ſo often enjoined

joined us; of not caring for, not truſting in, not minding (unduly that is, and immoderately) things below; of dying to this World and taking up our croſs, or contentedly ſuffering (in ſubmiſſion to God's will) all loſs and inconvenience; as alſo to the placing our meditation and care; our love and deſire; our hope and confidence; our joy and ſatisfaction; our moſt earneſt pains and endeavours upon things divine, ſpiritual and eternal.

IV. I proceed to another general benefit of that general conſideration; which is that it may engage us to a good improvement of our time; the doing which is a very conſiderable piece of wiſedom. For if time be, (as *Theophraſtus* called it truly) *a thing of moſt pretious value* (or expence) as it were a great folly to laviſh it away unprofitably; ſo to be frugal thereof, and carefull to lay it out for the beſt advantage, eſpecially every Man having

Πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα.

ving ſo little ſtore thereof, muſt be a ſpecial point of Prudence. *To be covetous of time* (*Seneca* tells us) *is a commendable avarice*; it being neceſſary for the accompliſhment of any worthy enterprize; there being nothing excellent, that can ſoon or eaſily be effected. Surely he that hath much and great buſineſs to diſpatch; and but a little time allowed for it, is concerned to husband it well; not to loſe it wholly in idleneſs; not to trifle it away in unneceſſary divertiſements; not to put himſelf upon other impertinent affairs; above all not to create obſtacles to himſelf, by purſuing matters of a tendency quite contrary to the ſucceſs of his main undertakings. 'Tis our caſe; we are obliged here to negotiate in buſineſs of infinite price and conſequence to us; no leſs than the ſalvation of our ſouls and eternal happineſs; and we ſee, that our time to drive it on and bring it to a happy iſſue is very ſcant and ſhort; ſhort in it ſelf; and very ſhort

Nulla niſi temporis honeſta eſt avaritia. Sen.

in respect to the nature of those affairs; the great variety, and the great difficulty of them: The great father of *Physicians* did quicken the students of that faculty to diligence, by admonishing them (in the first place, setting it in the front of his famous *Aphorisms*) that, *life is short, and art is long.* And how much more so is the art of living well (that most excellent and most necessary art; for indeed vertue is not a gift of nature, but a work of art; an effect of labour and study) this, I say most needfull and usefull art of living vertuously and piously; this art of spiritual Physick; (of preserving and recovering our souls health) how much longer is it? how many rules are to be learnt? how many precepts to be observed in order thereto? We are bound to furnish our minds with needfull knowledge of God's will and our duty; we are to bend our unwilling Wills to a ready compliance with them; we are to adorn our souls with dispositions suitable to the future

Non enim dat natura virtutem; ars est bonum fieri. Sen. *Ep.* 89.

ture ſtate (ſuch as may qualifie us for the preſence of God, and converſation with the bleſſed ſpirits above) it is incumbent on us to mortify corrupt deſires, to reſtrain inordinate paſſions, to ſubdue natural propenſities, to extirpate vitious habits; in order to the effecting theſe things, to uſe all fit means; devotion toward God, ſtudy of his Law, reflexion upon our actions, with all ſuch ſpiritual inſtruments; the performing which duties, as it doth require great care and pains, ſo it needs much time; all this is not *dictum factum*, as ſoon done as ſaid; a few ſpare minutes will not ſuffice to accompliſh it. Natural inclination, that wild beaſt within us, will not ſo preſently be tamed, and made tractable by us. Ill habits cannot be removed without much exerciſe and attendance; as they were begot, ſo they muſt be deſtroyed, by a conſtant ſucceſſion, and frequency of acts. Fleſhly luſt is not to be killed with a ſtab or two; it will

Τί φθείρει ἕξις; ἐναντία ἕξις. Epict.

will fight ſtoutly, and rebell often, and hold out long before with our utmoſt endeavour we can obtain an entire victory over it. No vertue is acquired in an inſtant, but by degrees, ſtep by ſtep; from the ſeeds of right inſtruction and good reſolution it ſprings up, and grows forward by a continual progreſs of cuſtomary practice; 'tis a child of patience, a fruit of perſeverance (that ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *enduring in doing well*, St. *Paul* ſpeaks of) and conſequently a work of time, for enduring implies a good ſpace of time. Having therefore ſo much to doe, and of ſo great concernment, and ſo little a portion of time for it, it behoves us to be carefull in the improvement of what time is allowed us; to embrace all opportunities and advantages offered; to go the neareſt way, to uſe the beſt *compendiums* in the tranſaction of our buſineſs; not to be ſlothfull and negligent, but active and intent about it; (for as time is diminiſhed, and in part loſt by

Rom. 2. 7.

by ſloth or ſlackneſs; ſo it is enlarged, and, as it were, multiplied by induſtry; my day is two in reſpect of his, who doeth but half my work.) Not (alſo) to conſume our time in fruitleſs paſtimes, and curious entertainments of fancy; being idly buſie about impertinences and trifles (we call it ſport, but 'tis a ſerious damage to us;) not to immerſe our ſelves in multiplicities of needleſs care about ſecular matters, which may diſtract us, and bereave us of fit leiſure for our great employment; that which our *Saviour* calls Luke 10. 40. περιβάλλεσθαι περὶ πολλὰ, *to keep a great deal of doe* and ſtir (to be jumbled about as it were, and confounded) *about many things*; and, περισπᾶσθαι περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν, *to be diſtracted* and perplexed *about much comberſome ſervice*; which St. *Paul* calls περιπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, *to be implicated* and entangled (as in a net) *with the negotiations of this preſent life*; ſo that we ſhall not be expedite, or free to 1 Tim. 2. 4.

beſtir

beſtir our ſelves about our more weighty affairs. The ſpending much time about thoſe things doth ſteal it from theſe; yea, doth more than ſo, by diſcompoſing our minds ſo that we cannot well employ what time remains upon our ſpiritual concernments. But eſpecially we ſhould not proſtitute our time upon vitious projects and practices; doing which is not onely a prodigality of the preſent time, but an abridgment of the future; it not onely doth not promote or ſet forward our buſineſs, but brings it backward; and makes us more work than we had before; 'tis a going in a way directly contrary to our journey's-end. The Scripture aptly reſembles our life to a wayfaring, a condition of travel and pilgrimage; now he that hath a long journey to make, and but a little time of day to paſs it in, muſt in reaſon ſtrive to ſet out ſoon, and then to make good ſpeed · muſt proceed on directly, making no ſtops or deflections (not calling in at every ſign that invites him,

him, not ſtanding to gaze at every object ſeeming new or ſtrange to him; not ſtaying to talk with every Paſſenger that meets him; but rather avoiding all occaſions of diverſion and delay) leſt he be ſurprized by the night, be left to wander in the dark, be excluded finally from the place whither he tends: So muſt we in our courſe towards Heaven and Happineſs; take care that we ſet out ſoon (procraſtinating no time, but beginning inſtantly to inſiſt in the ways of Piety and Vertue) then proceed on ſpeedily, and perſiſt conſtantly; no-where ſtaying or loitering, ſhunning all impediments and avocations from our Progreſs; leſt we never arrive near, or come too late unto the gate of Heaven. St. *Peter* tells us, that the end of all things doth approach, and thereupon adviſes us *to be ſober, and to watch unto prayer*; for that the leſs our time is, the more intent and induſtrious it concerns us to be. And, St. *Paul* injoins us to *redeem* 1 Pet 4. 7

the

Eph. 5. 15. *the time, becauſe the days are evil*; that is, ſince we can enjoy no true quiet or comfort here, we ſhould improve our time to the beſt advantage for the future; he might have alſo adjoined, with the Patriarch *Jacob*, the paucity of the days to their badneſs; becauſe *the days of our life are few and evil*, let us redeem the time; *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble:* So few indeed they are, that 'tis fit we ſhould loſe none of them, but uſe them all in preparation toward that great change we are to make; that fatal paſſage out of this ſtrait time into that boundleſs eternity. So, it ſeems, we have *Job*'s example of doing: *All the days* (ſays he) *of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.* I end this Point with that ſo comprehenſive warning of our Saviour: *Take heed to your ſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life; and ſo that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye there-*

Gen. 47. 9
Job 14. 1.

Job 14. 14.

Luke 21. 34.

therefore and pray, that ye may be counted worthy to eſcape —— and to ſtand before the Son of man.

V. I ſhall adjoin but one uſe more, to which this conſideration may be ſubſervient, which is, that it may help to beget and maintain in us (that which is the very heart and ſoul of all goodneſs) Sincerity. Sincerity in all kinds, in our thoughts, words and actions. To keep us from harbouring in our breaſts ſuch thoughts, as we would be afraid or aſhamed to own: from ſpeaking otherwiſe than we mean, than we intend to doe, than we are ready any-where openly to avow; from endeavouring to ſeem what we are not; from being one thing in our expreſſions and converſations with men; another in our hearts, or in our cloſets. From acting with oblique reſpects to private intereſts or paſſions, to humane favour or cenſure (in matters, I mean, where duty doth intervene,

tervene, and where pure conſcience ought to guide and govern us) from making profeſſions and oſtentations (void of ſubſtance, of truth, of knowledge, of good purpoſe) great ſemblances of peculiar ſanctimony, integrity, ſcrupuloſity, ſpirituality, refinedneſs, like thoſe *Phariſees* ſo often therefore taxed in the Goſpel; as alſo from palliating, as thoſe men did, deſigns of ambition, avarice, envy, animoſity, revenge, perverſe humour, with pretences of zeal and conſcience. We ſhould indeed ſtrive to be good (and that in all real ſtrictneſs, aiming at utmoſt perfection) in outward act and appearance, as well as in heart and reality; for the glory of God and example of men (*providing things honeſt in the ſight of all men*) but we muſt not ſhine with a falſe luſtre, nor care to ſeem better than we are, nor intend to ſerve our ſelves in ſeeming to ſerve God; bartering ſpiritual commodities for our own glory or gain.

Rom. 12. 17.

For

For ſince the day approaches when *God will judge* τὰ κρυπτὰ ἀνθρώπων, *the things men do ſo ſtudiouſly conceal*; when *God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil*; ſince *we muſt all appear* (or rather, be all made apparent, be maniſeſted and diſcovered) *at the tribunal of Chriſt*; ſince *there is nothing covered, which ſhall not be revealed; nor hid, that ſhall not be known; ſo that whatever is ſpoken in the ear in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed on the houſe tops*: Since at length, and that within a very ſhort time (no man knows how ſoon) the whiſpers of every mouth (the cloſeſt murmurs of detraction, ſlander and ſycophantry) ſhall become audible to every ear; the abſtruſeſt thoughts of all hearts (the cloſeſt malice and envy) ſhall be diſcloſed in the moſt publick Theatre, before innumerable ſpectatours; the truth of all pretences ſhall be throughly examined; the juſt merit

Rom. 2. 16.

Eccl. 12. 14.

2 Cor. 5. 10.

Οὐ γὰρ παραστῆναι ἡμᾶς ἁπλῶς δεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ φανερωθῆναι. Chryſoſt.

Luke 12. 2, 3.

of every Perſon, and every cauſe ſhall with a moſt exact ſcrutiny be ſcann'd openly in the face of all the World; to what purpoſe can it be to juggle or baffle for a time; for a few days (perhaps for a few minutes) to abuſe, or to amuſe thoſe about us with crafty diſſimulation or deceit? Is it worth the pains to deviſe plauſible ſhifts, which ſhall inſtantly, we know, be detected and defeated; to bedaub foul deſigns with a fair varniſh, which death will preſently wipe off; to be dark and cloudy in our proceedings, whenas a clear day (that will certainly diſpel all darkneſs and ſcatter all miſts) is breaking in upon us; to make vizors for our faces, and cloaks for our actions, whenas we muſt very ſhortly be expoſed, perfectly naked and undiſguiſed, in our true colours, to the general view of Angels and Men? Heaven ſees at preſent what we think and doe; and our conſcience cannot be wholly ignorant or inſenſible; nor can Earth it

it ſelf be long unacquainted therewith. Is it not much better, and more eaſie (ſince it requires no pains or ſtudy) to act our ſelves, than to accommodate our ſelves to other unbeſeeming and undue parts; to be upright in our intentions, conſiſtent in our diſcourſes, plain in our dealings, following the ſingle and uniform guidance of our reaſon and conſcience, than to ſhuffle and ſhift, wandring after the various uncertain and inconſtant opinions or humours of men? What matter is it, what cloaths we wear, what garb we appear in, during this poſture of travel and ſojourning here; what for the preſent we go for; how men eſteem us, what they think of our actions? St. *Paul* at leaſt did not much ſtand upon it; for *with me*, ſaid he, *'tis a very ſmall thing* (ἐλάχιστον, the leaſt thing that can come under conſideration) *to be judged of you, or of humane day* (that is, of this preſent tranſitory, fallible, reverſible judgment of men.) If we 1 Cor. 4. 3.

mean well and doe righteouſly, our conſcience will at preſent ſatisfie us, and the divine (unerring and impartial) ſentence will hereafter acquit us; no unjuſt or uncharitable cenſure ſhall prejudice us; if we entertain baſe deſigns, and deal unrighteouſly; as our conſcience will accuſe and vex us here, ſo God will ſhortly condemn and puniſh us; neither ſhall the moſt favourable conceit of men ſtand us in ſtead. *Every man's work ſhall become manifeſt; for the day ſhall declare it; becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire; and the fire* (that is, a ſevere and ſtrict inquiry) *ſhall try every man's work, of what ſort it is.* I cannot inſiſt more on this Point; I ſhall onely ſay, that conſidering the brevity and uncertainty of our preſent ſtate, the greateſt ſimplicity may juſtly be deemed the trueſt wiſedom; that who deceives others doth cozen himſelf moſt; that the deepeſt policy (uſed to compaſs, or to conceal bad deſigns) will in the end appear the moſt downright folly.

1 Cor. 3. 13.

I

I might add to the precedent discourſes, that *Philoſophy* it ſelf hath commended this conſideration as a proper and powerfull inſtrument of vertue; reckoning the practice thereof a main part of wiſedom; the greateſt proficient therein in common eſteem, *Socrates*, having defined Philoſophy (or the ſtudy of wiſedom) to be nothing elſe, but (μελέτη θανάτου) *the ſtudy of death*; intimating alſo (in *Plato's Phædon*) that this ſtudy, the meditation of death and preparation of his mind to leave this World, had been the conſtant and chief employment of his life. That likewiſe, according to experience, nothing more avails to render the minds of men ſober and well compoſed, than ſuch ſpectacles of Mortality as do impreſs this conſideration upon them. For whom doth not the ſight of a Coffin or of a Grave gaping to receive a friend perhaps, an ancient Acquaintance; however a man in nature and ſtate altogether like our ſelves; of the mournfull looks

Τῶτο ἔχει ἡ τελειότης τῦ ἤθους τὸ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν ὡς τελευταίαν διεξάγειν. Anton. *lib.* 7.

looks and habits, of all the ſad pomps and ſolemnities attending man unto his long home, by minding him of his own frail condition, affect with ſome ſerious, ſome honeſt, ſome wiſe thoughts? And if we be reaſonable men, we may every day ſupply the need of ſuch occaſions, by repreſenting to our ſelves the neceſſity of our ſoon returning to the duſt; dreſſing in thought our own Herſes, and celebrating our own Funerals; by living under the continual apprehenſion and ſenſe of our tranſitory and uncertain condition; dying daily, or becoming already dead unto this World. The doing which effectually being the gift of God, and an eſpecial work of his Grace, let us of him humbly implore it, ſaying after the Holy *Prophet*, *Lord*, *ſo teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſedom.* Amen.

SER-

SERMON III.

The Danger and miſchief of delaying Repentance.

PSALM CXIX. 60.

I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.

THIS Pſalm (no leſs excellent in vertue, than large in bulk) containeth manifold reflexions upon the nature, the properties, the adjuncts and effects of God's Law, many ſprightly ejaculations about it (conceived in different forms of ſpeech; ſome in way of petition,

ſome of thankſgiving, ſome of reſolution, ſome of aſſertion or aphoriſm) many uſefull directions, many zealous exhortations to the obſervance of it; the which are not ranged in any ſtrict order, but, (like a variety of fair flowers and wholeſome herbs in a wild field) do with a grateſull confuſion lie diſperſed, as they freely did ſpring up in the heart, or were ſuggeſted by the devout ſpirit of him, who indited the *Pſalm*; whence no coherence of ſentences being deſigned, we may conſider any one of them abſolutely or ſingly by it ſelf.

Among them, that which I have picked out for the ſubject of my diſcourſe, implieth an excellent rule of practice, authoriſed by the *Pſalmiſt*'s example; it is propounded in way of devotion or immediate addreſs to God; unto whoſe infallible knowledge his conſcience maketh an appeal concerning his practice; not as boaſting thereof, but as praiſing God for it, unto whoſe

whoſe gratious inſtruction and ſuccour he frequently doth aſcribe all his performances: But the manner of propounding I ſhall not inſiſt upon; the rule it ſelf is, that ſpeedily, without any procraſtination or delay, we ſhould apply our ſelves to the obſervance of God's Commandments; the practice of which rule it ſhall be my endeavour to recommend and preſs.

It is a common practice of men, that are engaged in bad courſes, which their own conſcience diſcerneth and diſapproveth, to adjourn the reformation of their lives to a farther time, ſo indulging themſelves in the preſent commiſſion of ſin, that yet they would ſeem to purpoſe, and promiſe themſelves hereafter to repent, and take up: Few reſolve to perſiſt finally in an evil way, or deſpair of being one day reclaimed, but immediately and effectually to ſet upon it, many deem un-

Recognoſce ſingulos, conſidera univerſos, nullius non vitæ ſpectat in craſtinum; non enim vivunt, ſed victuri ſunt. Sen. *Ep.* 45.

Victuros agimus ſemper, nec vivimus unquam. Manil. 4.

unſeaſonable or needleſs; it will, they preſume, be ſoon enough to begin to morrow or next day, a month or a year hence, when they ſhall find more commodious opportunity, or ſhall prove better diſpoſed thereto; in the mean time with *Solomon*'s ſluggard, *Tet*, ſay they, *a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands*; let us but neglect this duty, let us but ſatisfie this appetite, let us but enjoy this bout of pleaſure; hereafter, God willing, we mean to be more carefull, we hope that we ſhall become more ſober: So like bad debtors; when our conſcience dunneth us, we always mean, we always promiſe to pay; if ſhe will ſtay a while, ſhe ſhall, we tell her, be ſatisfied; or like vain ſpendthrifts, we ſee our eſtate fly, yet preſume that it will hold out, and at length we ſhall reſerve enough for our uſe. Εἰς αὔριον τὰ σπουδαῖα, *Let ſerious buſineſs ſtay till the morrow*, was a ſaying that coſt dear to him who ſaid it; yet we

Prov. 6. 10.

Plut. *in* Pelop.

we in our greateſt concerns follow him.

But how fallacious, how dangerous and how miſchievous this manner of proceeding is; how much better and more adviſable it is, after the example propounded in our Text, ſpeedily to betake our ſelves unto the diſcharge of our debt and duty to God, the following conſiderations will plainly declare.

Non eſt crede mihi ſapientis dicere, vivam. Mart. *l.* 16.

1. We may conſider, that the obſervance of God's Commandments (an obſervance of them proceeding from an habitual diſpoſition of mind, in a conſtant tenour of practice) is our indiſpenſable duty, our main concernment, our onely way to happineſs; the neceſſary condition of our attaining ſalvation; that alone which can procure God's love and favour toward us; that unto which all real bleſſings here, and all bliſs hereafter are inſeparably annexed: *Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of man*; (the whole duty, the whole deſign, the whole

Eccl. 12. 13.

whole perfection, the ſum of our
Matt. 19. 27. wiſedom, and our happineſs.) *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the*
Pſal. 11. 7. *Commandments: The righteous Lord*
Prov. 15. 9. *loveth righteouſneſs, his countenance*
Rom. 2. 6. *doth behold the upright; God will render to every man according to his works*; theſe are Oracles indubitably clear, and infallibly certain; theſe are immovable terms of juſtice between God and Man, which never will, never can be relaxed;
Matt. 5. 18. Luke 16. 17. Pſal. 119. 15. being grounded on the immutable nature of God, and eternal reaſon of things; if God had not decreed, if he had not ſaid theſe things, they would not aſſuredly be true; for it is a foul contradiction to reaſon, that a Man ever ſhould pleaſe God without obeying him; 'tis a groſs abſurdity in nature, that a Man ſhould be happy without being good; wherefore all the wit in the World cannot deviſe a way, all the authority upon Earth (yea, I dare ſay, even in Heaven it ſelf) cannot eſtabliſh a condition, beſide faithfull obſervance

ſervance of God's Law, that can ſave, or make us happy; from it there can be no valid diſpenſation, without it there can be no effectual abſolution, for it there can be no acceptable commutation; nor in defect thereof will any faith any profeſſion, any trick or pretence whatever avail, or ſignifie any thing: Whatever expedient to ſupply its room ſuperſtition, miſtake, craft, or preſumption may recommend, we ſhall, relying thereon, be certainly deluded: If therefore we mean to be ſaved (and are we ſo wild as not to mean it?) if we do not renounce felicity (and do we not then renounce our wits?) to become vertuous, to proceed in a courſe of obedience, is a work that neceſſarily muſt be performed; and why then ſhould we not inſtantly undertake it; wherefore do we demur or ſtick at it? how can we at all reſt quiet, while an affair of ſo vaſt importance lieth upon our hands, or until our mind be freed of all uncertain-

tainty and ſuſpence about it? Were a probable way ſuggeſted to us of acquiring great wealth, honour or pleaſure, ſhould we not quickly run about it, could we contentedly ſleep, till we had brought the buſineſs to a ſure or hopeleſs iſſue? and why with leſs expedition or urgency ſhould we purſue the certain means of our preſent ſecurity and comfort, of our final ſalvation and happineſs? in doing ſo, are we not ſtrangely inconſiſtent with our ſelves?

Again, diſobedience is the certain road to perdition; that which involveth us in guilt and condemnation, that which provoketh God's wrath and hatred againſt us, that which aſſuredly will throw us into a ſtate of eternal ſorrow and wretchedneſs: *The fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in God's ſight, he hateth all the workers of iniquity; If ye do not repent, ye ſhall periſh. The wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the people that forget God; The unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God; The wicked*

Pſal. 5. 5.
Luke 13. 3.
Pſal. 9. 17.
1 Cor. 6. 9.
Matth. 25. 46. 7. 21.

wicked ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment; theſe are denunciations no leſs ſure than ſevere, from that mouth, which is never opened in vain; from the execution whereof there can be no ſhelter or refuge; And what wiſe man, what man in his right ſenſes would for one minute ſtand obnoxious to them? Who that any-wiſe tendereth his own welfare would move one ſtep forward in ſo perillous and deſtructive a courſe? the farther in which he proceedeth, the more he diſcoſteth from happineſs, the nearer he approacheth to ruine.

In other caſes common ſenſe prompteth men to proceed otherwiſe; for who, having rendred one his enemy that far overmatcheth him, and at whoſe mercy he ſtandeth, will not inſtantly ſue to be reconciled? who being ſeiſed by a pernicious diſeaſe, will not haſte to ſeek a cure? who being fallen into the jaws of a terrible danger, will not nimbly leap out thence? and ſuch plainly is our caſe; while we perſiſt

in

in ſin, we live in enmity and defiance with the Almighty, who can at his Pleaſure cruſh us; we lie under a fatal plague, which, if we do not ſeaſonably repent, will certainly deſtroy us; we incur the moſt dreadfull of all hazards, abiding in the confines of death and deſtruction; God frowning at us, guilt holding us, Hell gaping for us: Every Sinner is (according to the *Wiſe-man's* expreſſion) *as he that lieth down in the midſt of the ſea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a maſt*; and he that is in ſuch a caſe, is he not mad or ſenſeleſs, if he will not forthwith labour to ſwim out thence, or make all ſpeed to get down into a ſafer place? can any man with comfort lodge in a condition ſo diſmally tickliſh?

Prov. 23. 34.

2. We may conſider, that in order to our final welfare we have much work to diſpatch, the which requireth as earneſt care and painfull induſtry, ſo a competent long time; which, if we do not preſently fall on, may

may be wanting, and thence our work be left undone, or imperfect: To conquer and correct bad inclinations, to render our ſenſual appetites obſequious to reaſon, to compoſe our paſſions into a right and ſteady order, to cleanſe our ſouls from vanity, from perverſeneſs, from ſloth, from all vitious diſtempers, and in their room to implant firm habits of vertue; to get a clear knowledge of our duty, with a ready diſpoſition to perform it; in fine, to ſeaſon our minds with holy affections, qualifying us for the preſence of God, and converſation with the bleſſed Spirits above; theſe are things that muſt be done, but cannot be done in a trice; it is not *dictum factum*, as ſoon done as ſaid; but, ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *a patient continuance in well-doing* is needfull to atchieve it; for it no time can be redundant, the longeſt life can hardly be ſufficient: *Art is long, and life is ſhort*, may be an Aphoriſm in *Divinity* as well as in *Phyſick*; the art of living well, of preſerving our Rom. 2. 7.

Soul's health, and curing its diſtempers, requireth no leſs time to compaſs it, than any other Art or Science.

Οὐ καθεύδουσιν ἡμῖν χρηγεῖ βοηθεῖαν ὁ Θεὸς ἀλλὰ πονουμένοις. Chryſ. *ad* Eph. λογ κα.

Vertue is not a Muſhroom, that ſpringeth up of it ſelf in one Night, when we are aſleep or regard it not: But a delicate Plant, that groweth ſlowly and tenderly, needing much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much time to manure it, in our untoward ſoil, in this World's unkindly weather: happineſs is a thing too pretious to be purchaſed at an eaſie rate, Heaven is too high to be come at without much climbing; the Crown of Bliſs is a Prize too noble to be won without a long and a tough conflict. Neither is a vice a ſpirit that will be conjured down by a charm, or with a *Preſto* driven away; it is not an adverſary, that can be knocked down at a blow, or diſpatched with a ſtab. Whoever ſhall pretend at any time eaſily with a celerity, by a kind of *Legerdemain* or by any myſterious knack, a Man may

O quam iſtud parum putant, quibus tam facile videtur! Quint. 12. 1.

may be ſettled in vertue, or converted from vice, common experience abundantly will confute him; which ſheweth, that a habit otherwiſe (ſetting miracles aſide) cannot be produced or deſtroyed, than by a conſtant exerciſe of acts ſutable or oppoſite thereto; and that ſuch acts cannot be exerciſed without voiding all impediments and framing all Principles of action (ſuch as temper of body, judgment of mind, influence of cuſtome) to a compliance; that who by temper is peeviſh or cholerick, cannot without maſtering that temper become patient or meek; that who from vain opinions is proud, cannot without conſidering away thoſe opinions prove humble: that who by cuſtome is grown intemperate, cannot without weaning himſelf from that cuſtome come to be ſober; that who from the concurrence of a ſorry nature, fond conceits, mean breeding and ſcurvy uſage is covetous; cannot without draining all

thoſe ſources of his fault, be turned into liberal. The change of our mind is one of the greateſt alterations in nature, which cannot be compaſſed in any way, or within any time we pleaſe; but it muſt proceed on leiſurely and regularly, in ſuch order, by ſuch ſteps, as the nature of things doth permit; it muſt be wrought by a reſolute and laborious perſeverance; by a watchfull application of mind in voiding Prejudices, in waiting for advantages, in attending to all we doe; by forcible wreſting our nature from its bent, and ſwimming againſt the current of impetuous deſires; by a patient diſentangling our ſelves from practices moſt agreeable and familiar to us; by a wary fencing with temptations, by long ſtruggling with manifold oppoſitions and difficulties; whence the Holy Scripture termeth our practice a warfare, wherein we are to fight many a bloody battel with moſt redoubtable foes; a combat, which muſt be managed with our beſt

beſt skill, and utmoſt might; a race, which we muſt paſs through with inceſſant activity and ſwiftneſs.

If therefore we mean to be good or to be happy, it behoveth us to loſe no time; to be preſently up at our great task; to ſnatch all occaſions, to embrace all means incident of reforming our hearts and lives. As thoſe who have a long journey to go, do take care to ſet out early and in their way make good ſpeed, leſt the night overtake them before they reach their home; ſo it being a great way from hence to Heaven, ſeeing we muſt paſs over ſo many obſtacles, through ſo many Paths of duty before we arrive thither, it is expedient to ſet forward as ſoon as can be, and to proceed with all expedition; the longer we ſtay, the more time we ſhall need, and the leſs we ſhall have.

Ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἴομεν, ἦ γὰρ μέμβλωκε μάλιστα· Ἦμαρ ἀπ' ὠκὰ τάχα τοι ποτὶ ἕσπερα ῥίγιον ἔσαι. Hom. Od. ξ'.

3. We may conſider, that no future time which we can fix upon will be more convenient than the preſent is for our reformation. Let us pitch on what time we pleaſe, we ſhall be as unwilling and unfit to begin as we are now; we ſhall find in our ſelves the ſame indiſpoſitions, the ſame averſeneſs, or the ſame liſtleſneſs toward it as now: There will occur the like hardſhips to deter us, and the like Pleaſures to allure us from our duty; objects will then be as preſent and will ſtrike as ſmartly upon our ſenſes; the caſe will appear juſt the ſame, and the ſame Pretences for delay will obtrude themſelves; ſo that we ſhall be as apt then as now to prorogue the buſineſs. We ſhall ſay then, to morrow I will mend; and when that morrow cometh, it will be ſtill to morrow, and ſo the morrow will prove endleſs. If like the ſimple Ruſtick, (who ſtay'd by the

Cras hoc fiet; idem cras fiet, &c. Perſ. *Sat.* 5.

Qui non eſt hodie, cras minus aptus erit. Ovid. *de Rem.* I. Epiſt 4. 12.

the River ſide waiting till it had done running, that ſo he might paſs dry-foot over the chanel) we do conceit, that the ſources of ſin (bad inclinations within, and ſtrong temptations abroad) will of themſelves be ſpent or fail, we ſhall find our ſelves deluded. If ever we come to take up, we muſt have a beginning with ſome difficulty and trouble; we muſt courageouſly break through the preſent with all its enchantments; we muſt undauntedly plunge into the cold ſtream; we muſt rouſe our ſelves from our bed of ſloth; we muſt ſhake off that brutiſh improvidence which detaineth us, and why ſhould we not aſſay it now? there is the ſame reaſon now that ever we can have! yea, far more reaſon now; for if that we now begin, hereafter at a-

——*qui recte vivendi prorogat horam,*
Ruſticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille
Labitur, & labetur in omne volubilis ævum.
Hor. *Ep. I.* 2.

Εἰ μὲν λυσιτελὴς ἡ ὑστέρησις ὄζιν, ἡ παντελὴς ἀπόστασις αὐτῆς ὄζι λυσιτελεςέρα. Epict. 4. 12.
For the ſame reaſon we put it off, we ſhould put it away. If it be good at all, it is good at preſent.

ny determinate time, ſome of the work will be done, what remaineth will be ſhorter and eaſier to us. Nay farther,

Παρὰ τὸ σήμερον ἁμαρτάνειν εἰς πολλὰ χεῖρον ἀνάγκη σοι τὰ φραγμάτα ἔχειν. Epiſt. 4. 12.

4. We may conſider, that the more we defer, the more difficult and painfull our work muſt needs prove; every day will both enlarge our task, and diminiſh our ability to perform it: Sin is never at a ſtay; if we do not retreat from it, we ſhall advance in it; and the farther on we go, the more we have to come back; every ſtep we take forward, (even before we can return hither, into the ſtate wherein we are at preſent) muſt be repeated; all the web we ſpin muſt be unravelled; we muſt vomit up all we take in; which to doe we ſhall find very tedious and grievous.

Vice as it groweth in age, ſo it improveth in ſtature and ſtrength; from a puny Child it ſoon waxeth a luſty Stripling, then riſeth to be a ſturdy Man, and after a-while becometh a maſſy Giant, whom we ſhall

ſhall ſcarce dare to encounter, whom we ſhall be very hardly able to vanquiſh; eſpecially ſeeing that as it groweth taller and ſtouter, ſo we ſhall dwindle and prove more impotent; for it feedeth upon our vitals, and thriveth by our decay; it waxeth mighty by ſtripping us of our beſt forces; by enfeebling our reaſon, by perverting our will, by corrupting our temper, by debaſing our courage, by ſeducing all our appetites and paſſions to a treacherous compliance with it ſelf; every day our mind groweth more blind, our will more reſty, our ſpirit more faint, our appetites more fierce, our paſſions more headſtrong and untameable: The power and empire of ſin do ſtrangely by degrees encroach, and continually get ground upon us, till it hath quite ſubdued and enthralled us; firſt we learn to bear it, then we come to like it, by and by we contract a friendſhip with

Falſis opinionibus tanto quiſque inſeritur, quanto magis in eis, familiariuſque volutatur. Aug. *Ep.* 117.

with it, then we dote upon it, at laſt we become enſlaved to it in a bondage which we ſhall hardly be able, or willing to ſhake off; when not onely our necks are fitted to the yoke, our hands are manacled, and our feet ſhackled thereby; but our heads and hearts do conſpire in a baſe ſubmiſſion thereto: When vice hath made ſuch impreſſion on us, when this pernicious weed hath taken ſo deep root in our mind, will and affection, it will demand an extremely toilſome labour to extirpate it.

Indeed by continuance in ſin, the chief means (afforded by nature, or by grace) of reſtraining, or reducing us from it, are either cut off, or enervated and rendred ineffectual.

Natural modeſty, while it laſteth, is a curb from doing ill; Men in their firſt deflexions from vertue are baſhfull and ſhy; out of regard to other Mens opinion, and ten-

Μέγιστον πρὸς ἀρετὴν κώλυμα ἡ αἰδώς. Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

——nam quis
Peccandi finem poſuit, ſibi quando recepit
Ejectum ſemel attrita de fronte ruborem?
Juv. *Sat.* 13.

tenderneſs of their own honour they are afraid, or aſhamed to tranſgreſs plain rules of duty; but in proceſs this diſpoſition weareth out; by little and little they arrive to that character of the degenerate *Jews*, whom the *Prophets* call *impudent children*, having *a brow of braſs*, and *faces harder than a rock*; ſo that they commit ſin with open face, and in broad day, without any mask, without a bluſh; they deſpiſe their own reputation, and defy all cenſure of others; they outface and outbrave the World, till at length with prodigious inſolence they come to boaſt of wickedneſs, and *glory in their ſhame*, as an inſtance of high courage and ſpecial gallantry.

Ezek. 2. 4. 3. 7. Iſa. 48. 4. Jer. 5. 3. Prov. 21. 29.

Phil. 3. 19.

Conſcience is a check to beginners in ſin, reclaiming them from it, and rating them for it; but this in long ſtanders becometh uſeleſs, either failing to diſcharge its office, or aſſaying it to no purpoſe, having often been ſlighted, it will be

Ψυχὴ ἅπαξ ἁμαρτίας γευσαμένη καὶ ἀναλγήτως διατεθεῖσα πολλὴν παρέχει τῷ νοσήματι τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, &c. Chryſ. *Tom. Orat.* 64.

be weary of chiding; or if it be not wholly dumb, we ſhall be deaf to its reproof: As thoſe who live by cataracts or downfalls of Water are by continual noiſe ſo deafened as not to hear or mind it, ſo ſhall we in time grow ſenſeleſs, not regarding the loudeſt Peals and Ratlings of our conſcience.

(Ezek. 2. 4. 3. 7. Neh. 9. 29. 2 Chron. 36. 13. Dan. 5. 20.)

The Heart of a raw Novice in impiety is ſomewhat tender and ſoft, ſo that remorſe can pierce and ſting it; his neck is yielding and ſenſible, ſo that the yoke of ſin doth gall it; but in ſtout Proficients the heart becometh hard and ſtony, the neck ſtiff and brawny; (*an iron ſinew*, as the *Prophet* termeth it) ſo that they do not feel or reſent any thing; but are like thoſe of whom St. *Paul* ſpeaketh; οἵτινες ἀπηλγηκότες, who *being paſt feeling* all ſorrow or ſmart, *have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedneſs.*

Iſa. 48. 4.

Quo quis pejus ſe habet, minus ſentit. Sen. *Ep.* 53.

Eph. 4. 19.

When

When firſt we nibble at the Bait, or enter into bad courſes, our reaſon doth conteſt and remonſtrate againſt it, faithfully repreſenting to us the folly, the uglineſs, the baſeneſs, the manifold ill conſequences of ſinning; but that by continuance is muffled ſo as not to diſcern, or muzled ſo as not to declare; yea, often is ſo debauched as to excuſe, to avow and maintain, yea, to applaud and extol our miſcarriages.

For a time a Man retaineth ſome courage, and a hope that he may repent; but progreſs in ſin diſpiriteth and caſteth into deſpair; whether God be placable, whether himſelf be corrigible; an apprehenſion concerning the length of the way, or the difficulty of the work diſcourageth, and deſpondency rendreth him heartleſs and careleſs to attempt it. There is no Man that hath heard of God, who hath not at firſt ſome dread of offending him, and ſome diſſatisfaction in tranſgreſſing his will; it appearing to his mind

mind (not yet utterly blinded and depraved) a deſperate thing to brave his irreſiſtible Power, an abſurd thing to thwart his infallible Wiſedom, a deteſtable thing to abuſe his immenſe Goodneſs; but obſtinacy in ſin doth quaſh this conſcientious awe; ſo that at length
Pſal. 10. 4 36. 1. *God is not in all his thoughts, the fear of God is not before his eyes*; the Wrath of the Almighty ſeemeth a Bugbear, the fierceſt menaces of Religion ſound but as Ratties to him.

As for the gentle Whiſpers and Touches of Divine Grace, the monitory Diſpenſations of Providence, the good advices and wholſome reproofs of Friends, with the like means of reclaiming ſinners; theſe to Perſons *ſettled on their lees*,
Jer. 48. 11. Zeph. 1. 12. or fixed in bad cuſtome, are but as guſts of Wind bruſhing an old Oak, or as Waves daſhing on a Rock, without at all ſhaking or ſtirring it.

Now

Now when any Perſon is come to this paſs, it muſt be hugely difficult to reduce him; to retrieve a defloured Modeſty, to quicken a jaded Conſcience, to ſupple a callous Heart, to ſettle a baffled Reaſon, to rear a dejected Courage, to recover a Soul miſerably benummed and broken, to its former vigour and integrity, can be no eaſie matter.

The diſeaſes of our Soul no leſs than thoſe of our Body; when once they are inveterate, they are become more incurable; the longer we forbear to apply due remedy, the more hard their cure will prove; if we let them proceed far, we muſt e'er we can be rid of them, undergo a courſe of Phyſick very tedious and offenſive to us; many a rough Purge, many a ſore Phlebotomy, many an irkſome Sweat we muſt endure. Yea farther,

—fruſtra medicina paratur,
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras. Ovid.

Ῥᾷον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μὴ ἐνδῦναι κακία, ἢ φεύγουσαν διαφυγεῖν, ἢ φεύγουσαν ἀνακόψαι. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* 26.

5. We

5. We may conſider, that by delaying to amend, to doe it may become quite impoſſible; it may be ſo in the nature of the thing, it may be ſo by the will of God: The thing may become naturally impoſſible; for vice by cuſtome may paſs into nature, and prove ſo congeneal, as if it were born with us; ſo that we ſhall propend to it as a ſtone falleth down, or as a ſpark flieth upward: By ſoaking in Voluptuouſneſs we may be ſo transformed into Brutes, by ſleeping in malice ſo converted into Fiends, that we neceſſarily ſhall act like creatures of that kind, into which we are degenerated; and then nowiſe without a downright Miracle are we capable of being reformed.

Ἐπειδὰν εἰς φρενίτιν ἐκπεσόντες λακτίζωσι καὶ δάκνωσι τὰς βελούσας ἀπαλλαξαι τῆς ἀῤῥωστίας αὐτὰς, τότε νοσοῦσιν ἀνίατα. Chryſ. *in Babyl Orat.* 2.

Prov. 6. 9. *How long*, ſaith *Solomon*, *wilt thou ſleep, O Sluggard, when wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep?* We may be ſo often called on, and 'tis not eaſie to awaken us, when we are got into a ſpiritu-

ſpiritual ſlumber; but when we are, *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, ſo that all breath of holy affection is ſtopt, and no ſpiritual pulſe from our heart doth appear; that all ſenſe of duty is loſt, all appetite to good doth fail, no ſtrength or activity to move in a good courſe doth exert it ſelf; that our good complexion is diſſolved, and all our finer ſpirits are diſſipated; that our mind is quite crazed, and all its Powers are ſhattered or ſpoiled, when thus, I ſay, we are ſpiritually dead, how can we raiſe our ſelves, what beneath omnipotency can effect it? as a ſtick, when once 'tis dry and ſtiff, you may break it, but you can never bend it into a ſtreighter poſture, ſo doth the Man become incorrigible, who is ſettled and ſtiffned in vice. The ſtain of habitual ſin may ſink in ſo deep, and ſo thoroughly tincture all our Soul, that we may be like thoſe People, of whom the *Prophet* ſaith, *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the Leopard his ſpots? then*

Eph. 2. 1. Apoc. 3. 1. 1 Tim. 5. 6.

Frangas citius quam corrigas quæ in prauum induruerunt. Quintil. l. 3.

Jer. 13. 23.

may ye do good, that are accuſtomed to doe evil: Such an impoſſibility may ariſe from nature; one greater and more inſuperable may come from God.

To an effectual repentance the ſuccour of divine grace is neceſſary; but that is arbitrarily diſpenſed; *the ſpirit bloweth where it liſteth,* yet it liſteth wiſely, with regard both to the paſt behaviour, and preſent capacities of Men; ſo that to ſuch who have abuſed it, and to ſuch who will not treat it well, it ſhall not be imparted: And can we be well aſſured, can we reaſonably hope, that after we by our preſumptuous delays have put off God and dallied with his grace; after that he long in vain hath *waited to be gratious*; after that he hath endured ſo many neglects, and ſo many repulſes from us; after that we frequently have ſlighted his open invitations, and ſmothered his kindly motions in us; in ſhort, after we ſo unworthily have miſuſed his good-

John 3. 8.

goodneſs and patience, that he farther will vouchſafe his grace to us? when we have forfeited it, when we have rejected it, when we have ſpurned and driven it away, can we hope to recover it?

Τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας. Heb 10. 29. Ἀδύνατον. Heb. 6. 4.

There is a time, a ſeaſon, a day allotted to us; *our day* it is termed, *a day of ſalvation, the ſeaſon of our viſitation, an acceptable time*; wherein God freely doth exhibit grace, and preſenteth his mercy to us: if we let this day ſlip, *the night cometh when no man can work*; when *the things belonging to our peace will be hidden from our eyes*; when (as the *Prophet* expreſſeth it) we ſhall *grope for the wall like the blind, and ſtumble at noon-day as in the night, and be in deſolate places as dead men*; after that day is ſpent, and that comfortable light is ſet, a diſmal night of darkneſs, of cold, of diſconſolateneſs will ſucceed; when God being *weary of bearing* with Men doth utterly deſert them, and *delivereth them over to a reprobate mind*;

Luke 19. 42, 44. 2 Cor. 6. 2. Heb. 3. 13. John 9. 4. Luke 19. 42. Iſa. 59. 10. Jer. 15. 6. Mal. 2. 17. Iſa 1. 14. 7. 13. Rom. 1. 24, 26, 28.

mind; when ſubtracting his gratious direction and aſſiſtence, *he giveth them over to their own hearts luſts, and to walk in their own counſels*; when they are brought to complain with thoſe in the *Prophet*, *O Lord, why haſt thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardned our heart from thy fear?* when like *Pharaoh* they ſurvive only as objects of God's juſtice, or occaſions to glorify his power; when like *Eſau*, they cannot find a place of repentance, *although they ſeek it carefully with tears*; when as to the fooliſh loitering Virgins, *the door* of mercy is *ſhut upon them*; when the *maſter of the houſe doth riſe and ſhut the door*, &c. when that menace of divine wiſedom cometh to be executed; *They ſhall call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not chuſe the fear of the Lord:* And if neglecting our ſeaſon, and preſent means, we once fall into this ſtate, then

Pſal. 81. 12.

Iſa. 63. 17.

Rom. 9. 17.

Heb. 13. 17.

Matth. 25. 10.

Luke 13. 25.

Prov. 1. 28.

then is our caſe moſt deplorable; we are dead Men irreverſibly doomed, and only for a few moments reprieved from the ſtroak of final vengeance; *we are veſſels of wrath fitted* (or made up) *for deſtruction*; by a fatal blindneſs and obduration ſealed up to ruine; we are like the *terra damnata, that earth* (in the *Apoſtle,*) *which drinking up the rain, that cometh oft upon it, and bearing thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto curſing,* and *whoſe end is to be burned.* Wherefore according to the advice of the *Prophet, Seek ye the Lord, when he may be found, call ye upon him, while he is near.*

Rom. 9. 22.

Κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν. Heb. 6. 7, 8.

Iſa. 55. 6.

It is true, that God is ever ready upon our true converſion to receive us into favour, that his arms are always open to embrace a ſincere Penitent; that he hath declared, *whenever a wicked man turneth from his wickedneſs, and doeth that which is right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive*; that if *we do waſh our ſelves, make us clean, put away the evil of our do-*

Ezek. 18. 27.

Iſa. 1. 18.

ings, and ceaſe to do evil, then *although our ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow, though they be like crimſon they ſhall be as wool;* that if we *rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord, he is gratious and mercifull. and will repent of the evil;* that *God is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon him;* that whenever a prodigal Son with humble confeſſion and hearty contrition for his ſin doth *ariſe and go to his father,* he will embrace him tenderly, and entertain him kindly; that even a profane Apoſtate, and a bloody Oppreſſour (as *Manaſſes*) a lewd Strumpet (as *Magdalene*) a notable Thief (as he upon the Croſs) a timorous Renouncer (as St. *Peter*) a furious Perſecutour (as St. *Paul*), a ſtupid Idolater (as all the *Heathen* World, when the *Goſpel* came to them, was) the moſt heinous Sinner that ever hath been, or can be imagined to be, if he be diſpoſed to repent, is capable of mercy; thoſe declа-

Joel 2. 13.

Pſal. 86. 5.

Luke 15. 18.

Vid. Chryſ. *ad* Theod. 2. *Judas* (ſaith he there) was capable of pardon.

declarations and promiſes are infallibly true, thoſe inſtances peremptorily do evince, that repentance is never ſuper-annuated; that if we can turn at all, we ſhall not turn too late, that *pœnitentia nunquam ſera, modo ſeria*, is an irrefragable rule; yet nevertheleſs delay is very unſafe; for what aſſurance can we have, that God hereafter will enable us to perform thoſe conditions of bewailing our ſins, and forſaking them? have we not cauſe rather to fear that he will chaſtiſe our preſumption by with-holding his Grace? for although God faileth not to yield competent aids to Perſons who have not *deſpiſed his goodneſs and long-ſuffering that leadeth them to repentance*; Rom. 2. 4. yet he that wilfully or wantonly loitereth away the time, and ſquandereth the means allowed him; who refuſeth to come when God calleth, yea woeth and courteth him to repentance, how can he pretend to find ſuch favour?

We might add, that ſuppoſing God in ſuper-abundance of mercy might be preſumed never to withhold his grace; yet ſeeing his grace doth not work by irreſiſtible compulſion; ſeeing the worſe qualified we are, the more apt we ſhall be to croſs and defeat its operation; ſeeing that we cannot hope that hereafter we ſhall be more fit than now to comply with it: Yea, ſeeing we may be ſure, that after our hearts are hardned by perſeverance in ſin, we ſhall be more indiſpoſed thereto; we by delay of repentance do not onely venture the forfeiture of divine grace, but the danger of abuſing it, which heinouſly will aggravate our guilt, and hugely augment our puniſhment.

We ſhould do well therefore moſt ſeriouſly to regard the *Apoſtle*'s admonition; *Exhort one another to day, while it is called to day, leſt any of you be hardned by the deceitfulneſs of ſin:* Now that we find our ſelves invited to repent, now that we apprehend

Heb. 3. 13.

prehend ſo much reaſon for it; now that we feel our hearts ſomewhat enclined thereto; now that we have time in our hands, and are not barr'd from hopes of mercy; now that it is not extremely difficult, or not abſolutely impoſſible, let us in God's name lay hold on the occaſion, let us ſpeedily and earneſtly ſet upon the work. Farther yet,

6. We ſhould conſider, that we are mortal and frail, and thence any deſigns of future reformation may be clipt off, or intercepted by death; which is always creeping towards us, and may for all we can tell be very near at hand. You ſay you will repent to morrow; but are you ſure you ſhall have a morrow to repent in? have you an hour in your hand, or one minute at your diſpoſal? have you a leaſe to ſhew for any term of life? can you claim or reckon upon the leaſt portion of time without his leave, who beſtoweth life, and dealeth

Qui pœnitenti veniam ſpoſpondit, peccanti craſtinum diem non promiſit. Greg. *in Evang. Hom. IX.*

eth out time, and ordereth all things as he pleaſeth? Can you any-wiſe deſcry the juſt *meaſure of your days*, or *the bounds of your appointed time* without a ſpecial revelation from him, *in whoſe hands is your breath*; and *with whom* alone *the number of your months is* regiſtred? *Boaſt not thy ſelf of to morrow, for thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth*, ſaith the *Wiſe-man:* boaſt not of it, that is, do not pretend it to be at thy diſpoſal, preſume not upon any thing that may befall therein; for whilſt thou preſumeſt thereon, may it not be ſaid unto thee, as to the rich Projectour in the *Goſpel*, * *Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee.* Doth not, ſeluding hidden decrees, every Man's life hang upon a thread very ſlender and frail? is it not ſubject to many diſeaſes lurking within, and to a thouſand accidents flying about us? how many, that might have promiſed themſelves as fair ſcope as we can, have been unexpectedly ſnapt away? How many have

Job 12. 10. 14. 5. 7. 1. Pſal. 39. 4. 90. 12. Dan. 5. 23. Prov. 27. 1. Οὐκ οἶδας τι τέξεται ἡ ὅπι οὖσα· μὴ ὑπαγγέλλου τὰ μὴ σά. Baſ. M. *exh. ad Bap.*

* Luke 12. 10.

have been cropt in the flower of their age and vigour of their ſtrength? Doth not every day preſent experiments of ſudden death? Do we not continually ſee that obſervation of the *Preacher* verified, *Man knoweth not his time; as the fiſhes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds are caught in the ſnare, ſo are the ſons of men ſnared in an evil time, when it cometh ſuddenly upon them?* Old men are ready to drop of themſelves, and young men are eaſily bruſhed or ſhaken down; the former viſibly ſtand upon the brink of Eternity, the latter walk upon a bottomleſs Quag, into which unawares they may ſlump; who then can any-wiſe be ſecure? We are all therefore highly concerned to uſe our life, while we have it; to catch the firſt opportunity, leſt all opportunity forſake us; to cut off our ſinning, leſt our ſelves be cut off before

Eccles. 9. 12.

Τι γὰρ οἶδας ἄνθρωπε ἁμαρτήσας, εἰ ἡμέρας ζέσεις ἐν τῷ δὲ τῷ βίῳ, ἵνα καὶ μετανοήσης, &c.

Ὅτι ἄδηλος ἡ ἔξοδος σου ἐκ τοῦ βίου ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ τελευτήσαντι μετάνοια οὐκ ἔσται, &c. Conſt. Ap. 2. 13.

before it: And that the rather, becauſe by laviſhing, or miſemploying our preſent time, we may loſe the future, provoking God to bereave us of it; for as prolongation of time is a reward of Piety; as to obſervance of the Commandments

Prov. 3. 2. it is promiſed, *Length of days, and long life, and peace ſhall be added unto thee*; ſo being immaturely ſnatched hence is the puniſhment awarded to impious practice; ſo it

Pſal. 37. 9. is threatned that *Evil men ſhall be*

Pſal. 55. 23. *cut off*; that *bloody and deceitfull men ſhall not live out half their days*;

Pſal. 68. 21. that *God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of ſuch an one as goeth on ſtill in his wickedneſs*: the very being unmindfull of their duty is the cauſe, why men

Rev. 3. 3. 16. 5. are thus ſurpriſed; for, *If*, ſaith God, *thou doſt not watch, I ſhall come upon thee as a thief, and thou ſhalt not know when I come upon thee.* And

Luke 12. 45, 46. *If* (ſaith our Lord) *that ſervant doth ſay in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming*, &c. *The Lord of that*

that ſervant will come in a day, when he looketh not for him, &c.

If then it be certain, that we muſt render a ſtrict accompt of all our doings here; if by reaſon of our frail nature and ſlippery ſtate, it be uncertain when we ſhall be ſummoned thereto; if our negligence may abridge and accelerate the term, is it not very reaſonable to obſerve thoſe advices of our Lord; *Watch, for ye do not know the day, nor the hour, when the ſon of man cometh; Take heed to your ſelves, leſt any time your heart be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares: Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye your ſelves like men, that wait for your Lord:* And to take the counſel of the *Wiſe-man, Make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from day to day; for ſuddenly ſhall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy ſecurity ſhalt thou be deſtroyed, and periſh in the day of vengeance.* Theſe

Matth. 25. 13. 24. 42. Mark 13. 33. Luke 12. 15. 35.

Eccluſ. 5. 5.

Theſe conſiderations plainly do ſhew how very fooliſh, how extremely dangerous and deſtructive the procraſtinating our reformation of life is: there are ſome others of good moment, which we ſhall reſerve.

SER-

SERMON IV.

The Danger and miſchief of delaying Repentance.

PSALM CXIX. 60.

I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.

I Proceed to the Conſiderations which yet remain to be ſpoken to.

1. We may conſider the cauſes of delay in this caſe (as in all caſes of moment) to be bad and unworthy of a Man: What can they be but either ſtupidity, that we do not

not apprehend the importance of the affair; or improvidence that we do not attend to the danger of perſiſting in ſin; or negligence that we do not mind our concernments; or ſloth that keepeth us from rowſing and beſtirring our ſelves in purſuance of what appeareth expedient; or faint-heartedneſs and cowardize, that we dare not attempt to croſs our appetite, or our fancy; all which diſpoſitions are very baſe and ſhamefull: It is the prerogative of humane nature to be ſagacious in eſtimating the worth, and provident in deſcrying the conſequences of things; whereas other creatures, by impulſe of ſence, do onely fix their regard on preſent appearances; which peculiar excellency by ſtupidity and improvidence we forfeit, degenerating into brutes; and negligence of that, which we diſcern mainly to concern us is a quality ſomewhat beneath thoſe, depreſſing us below beaſts, which cannot be charged with ſuch a fault; ſloth is no

Ἀργίας πρόφασις ἢ ἀναβολή. Simpl.

Animal hoc providum, ſagax, Cic. *de leg.* 1. Cic. *de offic.* 1.

no leſs deſpicable, rendring a man fit for nothing; nor is there any thing commonly more reproachfull than want of courage: ſo bad are the cauſes of delay.

2. And the effects are no leſs unhappy, being diſappointment, damage, trouble and ſorrow: As expedition (catching advantages and opportunities, keeping the ſpirit up in its heat and vigour, making forcible impreſſions where-ever it lighteth, driving on the current of ſucceſs) doth ſubdue buſineſs, and atchieve great exploits (as by practiſing his Motto, *to defer nothing*, *Alexander* did accompliſh thoſe mighty feats which make ſuch a clatter in ſtory; and *Cæſar* more by the rapid quickneſs and forwardneſs of undertaking, than by the greatneſs of courage, and skilfulneſs of conduct, did work out thoſe enterpriſes, which purchaſed to his Name ſo much glory and renown) ſo delay and ſlowneſs do ſpoil all

Μηδὲν ἀναβαλλόμενος. *Succeſſus urgere ſuos, inſtare, &c.* Luc. 1.

Pleriſque in rebus tarditas & procraſtinatio odioſa eſt. Cic. *Philip.* 6.

business, do keep off success at distance from us, thereby opportunity is lost, and advantages slip away; our courage doth flag, and our spirit languisheth; our endeavours strike faintly, and are easily repelled; whence disappointment necessarily doth spring, attended with vexation.

Ἀιεὶ δ' ἀμβολιεργὸς ἀνὴρ ἄτῃσι πα λαίει. Hes.

Dum deliberamus quando incipiendum est, incipere jam serum est. Quint. 12. 7.

3. Again, we may consider, that to set upon our duty is a great step toward the performance of it; if we can resolve well, and a little push forward, we are in a fair way to dispatch; *to begin* (they say) *is to have half done*; to set out, is a good part of the journey; to rise betimes is oftener harder than to do all the days work; entring the Town, is almost the same with taking it; it is so in all business, it is chiefly so in moral practice: For if we can find in our hearts to take our leave of sin

Dimidium facti qui cœpit habet. Hor. *Ep.* 1. 2.

Μόνον ἀρχὴν ἐπίθες τῷ πράγματι, &c. Chrys. *Tom.* 6. *Orat. p.* 68.

Τὸ δυσχερές καὶ δυσκατόρθωτον τοῦτο ἔστι· τὸ δυνηθῆναι ἐπιβῆναι τῆς εἰσόδου καὶ τῶν προθύρων ἅψασθαι τῆς μετανοίας. *Ib. p.* 79.

if we can diſengage our ſelves from the witcheries of preſent allurement; if we can but get over the threſhold, of vertuous converſation, we ſhall find the reſt beyond expectation ſmooth and expedite; we ſhall diſcover ſuch beauty in vertue, we ſhall taſt ſo much ſweetneſs in obedience as greatly will encourage us to proceed therein.

Honeſtas, quæ principio anxia habetur, ubi contigerit, voluptati luxuriæque habetur. Vict. *in* Sept. Sev.

4. Again, we may conſider, that our time it ſelf is a gift, or a talent committed to us, for the improvement whereof we are reſponſible no leſs than for our Wealth, our Power, our Credit, our Parts, and other ſuch advantages, wherewith for the ſerving of God, and furthering our own ſalvation we are intruſted: *To redeem the time* is a Precept; and of all Precepts the moſt neceſſary to be obſerved, for that without redeeming (that is embracing and well employing) time we can do nothing well; no good action can

Eph. 5. 16. Col. 4. 5.

be performed, no good reward can be procured by us: Well may we be adviſed to take our beſt care in husbanding it, ſeeing juſtly of all things it may be reckoned moſt pretious; its price being ineſtimable, and its loſs irreparable; for all the World cannot purchaſe one Moment of it more than is allowed us, neither can it, when once gone, by any means be recovered: So much indeed as we ſave thereof, ſo much we preſerve of our ſelves; and ſo far as we loſe it, ſo far in effect we ſlay our ſelves, or deprive our ſelves of life; yea by miſpending it we do worſe than ſo; for a dead ſleep, or a ceſſation from being, is not ſo bad as doing ill; all that while we live backward, or decline toward a ſtate much worſe than annihilation it ſelf. Farther

Πολυτελέστα τον ἀναλωμα.

5. Conſider, that of all time the preſent is ever the beſt for the purpoſe of amending our life; It is the onely ſure time, that which we have in our hands, and may call our own;

Omnia quæ ventura ſunt in incerto jacent, protinus vive. Sen. *de vit. brev.* 9.

where-

whereas the paſt time is irrevocably gone from us; and the future may never come to us: It is abſolutely (reckoning from our becoming ſenſible of things, and accomptable for our actions) the beſt, as to our capacity of improving it;

Optima quæque dies miſeris mortalibus ævi Prima fugit Virg. *Georg.* 3.

Our beſt days do firſt paſs away, was truly ſaid; the nearer to its ſource our life is, the purer it is from ſtain, the freer from clogs, the more ſuſceptive of good impreſſions, the more vivid and brisk in its activity; the farther we go on, eſpecially in a bad courſe, the nearer we verge to the dregs of our life; the more dry, the more ſtiff, the more ſluggiſh we grow; delay therefore doth ever ſteal away the flower of our age, leaving us the bran and refuſe thereof. Again,

6. If at any time we do reflect upon the time that hath already ſlipped away unprofitably from us, it will ſeem more than enough, and

(if we conſider well) it will be grievous to us to loſe more; the morrow will ſeem too late to commence a good life; ἀρκετὸς ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος, *The time paſt of our life* (ſaith St. *Peter*) *may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*, or to have continued in ill courſes; more indeed it might than ſuffice; it ſhould be abundantly too much to have imbezilled ſo large a portion of our pretious and irreparable time: After we have ſlept in neglect of our duty, ὥρα ἤδη ἐγερθῆναι, *it is* (as St. *Paul* ſaith) *now high time to awake*, unto a vigilant obſervance thereof: this we ſhall the rather do, if we conſider, that

Sera nimis vita eſt craſtina, vive hodie. Mart. 1. 16.

1 Pet. 4. 3.

Rom. 13. 11.

7. For illliving now we ſhall come hereafter to be ſorry, if not with a wholſome contrition, yet with a painfull regret; we ſhall certainly one day repent, if not of our ſin, yet of our ſinning; if not ſo as to correct for the future, yet ſo as to condemn our ſelves for what is paſt: the conſideration of our having

ving ſacrilegiouſly robb'd our Maker of the time due to his ſervice; of our having injuriouſly defrauded our ſouls of the opportunities granted to ſecure their welfare; of our having profuſely caſt away our moſt pretious hours of life upon vanity and folly, will ſome time twitch us ſorely. There is no man who doth not with a ſorrowfull eye review an ill-paſt life; who would not gladly recall his miſpent time; *O mihi præteritos!* O that God would reſtore my paſt years to me, is every ſuch Man's Prayer, although it never was heard, never could be granted unto any. And what is more inconſiſtent with wiſedom, than to engage our ſelves upon making ſuch ineffectual and fruitleſs wiſhes? What is more diſagreeable to reaſon, than to do that, for which we muſt be forced to confeſs and call our ſelves fools? What Man of ſenſe for a flaſh of tranſitory Pleaſure, for a puff of vain repute, for a few ſcraps of dirty Pelf would plunge himſelf into ſuch a gulf of anguiſh?

Ille ſapit quiſquis, Poſthume, vixit heri. Mart. 5. 60.

8. On the contrary, if laying hold on occaſion, we ſet our ſelves to do well, reflexion thereon will yield great ſatisfaction and pleaſure to us; we ſhall be glad that we have done, and that our task is over; we ſhall *enjoy our former life*; Our time which is ſo paſt will not yet be loſt unto us; but rather it will be moſt ſecurely ours, laid up beyond the reach of danger, in the repoſitory of a good conſcience.

Ampliat ætatis ſpatium ſibi vir bonus, hoc eſt Vivere bis, vita poſſe priore frui. Mart. 10. 23.

Rom. 2.

9. Again, all our time of continuance in ſin we do *treaſure up wrath*, or accumulate guilt; and the larger our guilt is, the ſorer muſt be our repentance; the more bitter the ſorrow, the more low the humbling, the more earneſt the deprecation requiſite to obtain pardon: the broader and deeper the ſtain is, the more waſhing is needfull to get it out; if we ſin much and long, we muſt grieve anſwerably, or we ſhall be no fit objects of mercy.

Quam magna deliquimus, tam granditer deſleamus, &c. Cypr. *de Lapſ.* Or. 5.

10. And

10. And whenever the ſin is pardoned, yet indelible marks and monuments thereof will abide. We ſhall eternally be obliged to cry *peccavi*; although the puniſhment may be remitted, the deſert of it cannot be removed; a ſcar from it will ſtick in our fleſh; which ever will deform us; a tang of it will ſtay in our memory, which always will be diſguſtfull; we ſhall never reflect on our miſcarriages without ſome confuſion and horrour; inceſſantly we ſhall be liable to that queſtion of St. *Paul*, *What fruit had ye of thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed?* If therefore we could reaſonable preſume, yea if we could certainly foreſee, that we ſhould hereafter in time repent, yet it were unadviſably to perſiſt in ſin, ſeeing it being once committed, can never be reverſed; never expunged from the regiſters of time, never daſhed out from the tables of our mind

Pœna poteſt demi, culpa perennis erit. Ovid.

Ἡ συγχώρησις ἐμένετο τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ἕως τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἡ μνήμη τῶν συγκεχωρημένων ἁμαρτημάτων οὐκ ἠφανίζετο ἕως τοῦ Παύλου. Chryſ. *Tom.* 8. *p.* 97.

Rom. 6. 21.

mind and memory; but will perpetually reſt as matter of dolefull conſideration, and of tragical ſtory to us. *Then ſhalt thou remember thy ways, and be aſhamed. That thou mayſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord God: Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall loath your ſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.*

Ezek. 16. 61.
Ezek. 16. 63.
Ezek. 36. 31.
Ezek. 20. 43.

11. Again, ſo much time as we ſpend in diſobedience, ſo much of reward we do forfeit; for commenſurate to our works ſhall our rewards be; the fewer our good works are in the courſe of our preſent life, the ſmaller ſhall be the meaſures of joy, of glory, of felicity diſpenſed to us hereafter; the later conſequently we repent, the leſs we ſhall be happy: *One ſtar* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *differeth from another in glory*; and

1 Cor. 15. 41.

and of all ſtars, thoſe in the celeſtial ſphere will ſhine brighteſt, who did ſoon riſe here, and continued long by the luſtre of their good works to glorify their heavenly Father; for *the path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Prov. 4. 18. While therefore we let our intereſt lie dead by lingring, or run behind by ſinfull practice, we are very bad husbands for our ſoul; our ſpiritual eſtate doth thereby hugely ſuffer; every minute contracteth a damage that runneth through millions of ages, and which therefore will amount to an immenſe ſumm: And who for all the pleaſures here would forego one degree of bliſsfull joy hereafter; who for all earthly ſplendours would exchange one ſpark of celeſtial glory; who for all the treaſures below would let ſlip one gem out of his heavenly crown?

12. Farther, let us conſider that whatever our age, whatever our condition or caſe be, the advice not

to

to procraſtinate our obedience is very ſutable and uſefull.

Sub pædagogo caperis licet; ſerum eſt. Mart. 8. 44.

Art thou young? then it is moſt proper to enter upon living well. For when we ſet out, we ſhould be put in a right way; when we begin to be Men, we ſhould begin to uſe our reaſon well; life and vertue ſhould be of the ſame ſtanding; what is more ugly than a Child, that have learnt little, having learnt to do ill; than naughtineſs ſpringing up in that ſtate of innocence? the foundation of good life is to be laid in that age, upon which the reſt of our life is built; for this is the manner of our proceeding; the preſent dependeth always upon what is paſt; our practice is guided in notions that we had ſucked in, is ſwayed by inclinations that we got before; whence uſually our firſt judgments of things, and our firſt propenſions to ſtretch their influence upon the whole future life. *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,* ſaith the *Wiſe-man.* That

Prov. 22. 6.

That age as it is moſt liable to be corrupted by vice, ſo it is moſt capable of being imbued with vertue: then nature is ſoft and pliable, ſo as eaſily to be moulded into any ſhape, ready to admit any ſtamp impreſſed thereon; then the mind is a pure table, in which good principles may be fairly engraven, without raiſing out any former ill prejudices; then the heart being a ſoil free of weeds, the ſeeds of goodneſs being caſt therein will undiſturbedly grow and thrive; then the complexion being tender will eaſily be ſet into a right poſture; Our ſoul is then a Veſſel empty and ſweet; good liquour therefore may be inſtilled, which will both fit it, and ſeaſon it with a durable tincture; the extream curioſity and huge credulity of that age, as they greedily will ſwallow

Naturæ tenaciſſimi ſumus eorum, quæ rudibus annis percipimus, &c. Quint. 1. 1.

Difficulter eraditur quod rudes animi perbiberunt. Hier. *ad* Lætam.

Ut corpora ad quoſdam membrorum flexus formari niſi tenera non poſſunt, ſic animos ad pleraque duriores robur ipſum facit. Quint. *ib.*

Quo ſemel eſt imbuta recens ſervabit odorem Teſta diu. Hor. *Ep.* 1. 2.

swallow any, so will they admit good instruction. If we do then imbibe false conceptions, or have bad impressions made on our minds, it will be hard afterwards to expell, or to correct them. Passion is then very fluid and moveable, but not being impetuously determined any way, may easily be derived into the right chanel. Then the quickness of our wit, the briskness of our fancy, the freshness of our memory, the vigour of our affections, the lusty and active mettle of our spirits being applied to vertuous studies and endeavours, will produce most noble fruits; the beauty of which will adorn us, the sweetness will please us, so as to leave on our minds a perpetual relish and satisfaction in goodness. Then being less encombred with the cares, less intangled in the perplexities, less exposed to the temptations of the World and secular Affairs, we can more easily set forth, we

Ἤδει γὰρ ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἡ νεότης, ὅτι εὐρίπιστον, ὅτι εὐεξαπάτητον, ὅτι εὐόλισθον, καὶ σφοδροτέρου δεῖ χαλινοῦ. Chrys. ἀνδ. α'.

we may proceed more expeditely in good courſes. Then being void of that ſtinging remorſe, which doth adhere to reflexions upon paſt follies, and miſpent time, with more courage and alacrity we may proſecute good undertakings; then beginning ſo ſoon to embrace vertue, we ſhall have advantage with more leiſure, and more eaſe to poliſh and perfect it through our enſuing courſe of life; ſetting out ſo early, in the very morning of our age, without much ſtraining, marching on ſoftly and fairly, we may go through our journey to happineſs.

Our actions then are the firſt fruits of our life, which therefore are fit and due ſacrifices to our Maker; which if we do withdraw, we ſhall have nothing left ſo worthy or acceptable to preſent unto him; will it be ſeemly to offer him the dregs and refuſe of our age; ſhall we not be aſhamed to bring a crazy temper of body and ſoul, dry bones and decayed ſenſes; a dull fancy, a treacherous

cherous memory, a ſluggiſh ſpirit before him? ſhall we then when we are fit for little begin to undertake his ſervice? with our decrepid limbs and waſted ſtrength ſhall we ſet our ſelves to *run the ways of his commandments?*

As it is uncomfortable to think of being parſimonious, when our ſtock is almoſt gone; ſo it is to become thrifty of our life, when it comes near the bottom. Δεινὴ ἐνὶ πυθμένι φειδώ.

If we keep innocency, ſpend our youth well, it will yield unexpreſſible comfort to us; it will ſave us much ſorrow, it will prevent many
Pſal. 37. 38. inconveniences to us: If we have ſpent it ill, it will yield us great diſpleaſure, it will coſt us much pains; we ſhall be forced ſadly to bewail our folly and vanity therein; it will be bitter to ſee, that we muſt unlive our former life, and undoe all we have done; that we muſt renounce the Principles we have avowed, we muſt root out the habits

bits we have planted, we must forsake the Paths which we have beaten and so long trode in, if ever we will be happy; it will be grievous to us, when we come with penitential regret to deprecate, *Lord remember not the sins of my youth*; we shall feel sore pain, when *our bones are full of the sins of our youth*, and we come *to possess the iniquities thereof*.

Psal. 25. 7.

Job 20. 11.

13. 26.

It is therefore *good* (as the *Prophet* saith) *that a man bear the yoke in his youth*, when his neck is tender; it is excellent advice which the *Preacher* giveth, *Remember thy Creatour in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.*

Lam. 3. 27.

Fingit equum tenera docilem cervice Magister
Ire viam, quam monstrat eques.--
Hor.

Eccl. 12. 1.

Aristotle saith, that young men are not *fit hearers of moral doctrine*; because (saith he) *they are unexperi-*

Eth. 1. 3.

Τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκεῖος ἀκροατὴς ὁ νέος· ἄπειρος γὰρ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων· ἔτι τοῖς παθέσιν ἀκολουθητικὸς ἂν ματαίως ἀκούσεται καὶ ἀνωφελῶς.

enced in affairs of life; and *becauſe they are apt to follow their paſſions, which indiſpoſe to hear with fruit or profit*; but his concluſion is falſe, and his reaſons may be well turned againſt him; for becauſe young men want experience, therefore is there no bad prejudice, no contrary habit to obſtruct their embracing ſound doctrine; becauſe their paſſions are vehement and ſtrong, therefore being rightly ordered, and ſet upon good objects they with great force will carry them to vertuous practice; that indeed is the beſt time to regulate and tame Paſſions; as Horſes muſt be broken when they are Colts, Dogs muſt be made when they are Whelps, elſe they will never be brought to any thing. The *Poet* therefore adviſed better than the *Philoſopher*,

Hor. *Ep.* 1. 2. ——*nunc adbibe puro*
Pectore verba puer, nunc te melioribus offer;

Eph. 6. 4. and St. *Paul* plainly doth confute him, when he biddeth Parents to *educate their children in the nurture and*

and admonition of the Lord; when he chargeth *Titus*, that he *exhort young men to be ſober-minded*; when he commendeth *Timothy*, for that he had ἀπὸ βρέφους *from his infancy known the Holy Scriptures*; So doth the *Pſalmiſt*, when he ſaith, *Wherewith ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? by taking heed according to thy word.* And *Solomon*, when he declareth that his moral Precepts did ſerve *to give ſubtilty to the ſimple, to the young man knowledge and diſcretion*; when he biddeth us to *train up a child in the way he ſhould go*; St. *Peter* doth intimate the ſame, when he biddeth us, *as new born babes to deſire the ſincere milk of the word*; and our Saviour, when he ſaid, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of ſuch is the kingdom of God*; that is the more ſimplicity and innocence a Man is endued with, the more apt he is to embrace and comply with the Evangelical Doctrine: *Ariſtotle* therefore was out, when he would exclude young men from

Tit. 2. 6. 2 Tim. 2. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 15. Pſal. 119. 9. Prov. 1. 4. Prov. 22. 6, 15. 1 Pet. 2. 2. Luke 18. 16.

the Schools of Vertue. It is obſervable that he contradicteth himſelf; for Eth. 2. 2. Οὐ μικρὸν διαφέρει τὸ ἥττως ἢ ἥττως, ἐυθὺς ἐκ νέων ἐθίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ πάμπολυ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ πᾶν. *It is* (ſaith he) *of no ſmall concernment to be from youth accuſtomed thus or thus; yea 'tis very much, or rather all:* And how ſhall a young man be accuſtomed to do well, if he be not allowed to learn what is to be done?

Again, are we old? it is then high time to begin; we have then leſs time to ſpare from our moſt important buſineſs; we ſtand then in moſt imminent danger, upon the edge of perdition, and ſhould therefore be nimble to skip out thence; our forces being diminiſhed, our quickneſs and induſtry ſhould be encreaſed; the later we ſet out, the more ſpeed it behoveth us to make. If we ſtay, we ſhall grow continually more indiſpoſed and unfit to amend,

Quod facere ſolent qui ſerius exeunt — calcar addamus. Sen. *Ep.* 68. 76. 10.

Apoc. 3. 2. Στήριξον τὰ λοιπὰ, ἃ μέλλει ἀποθανεῖν.

amend, it will be too late, when utter decrepitneſs and dotage have ſeiſed upon us; and our body doth ſurvive our ſoul. When ſo much of our time, of our parts, of our ſtrength are fled, we ſhould husband the reſt to beſt advantage, and make the beſt ſatisfaction we can unto God, and unto our ſouls with the remainder.

This age hath ſome peculiar advantages, which we ſhould embrace; the froth of humours is then boiled out, the fervours of luſt are ſlaked, paſſions are allayed, appetites are flatted; ſo that then inclinations to ſin are not ſo violent, nor doth the enjoyment thereof ſo much gratify.

——non omnia grandior ætas
Quæ fugiamus habet — Ovid.

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ νεότης πελάγει προσέοικε μαινομένῳ, κυμάτων ἀγρίων, καὶ πνευμάτων γέμοντι πονερῶν· ἡ δὲ πολιὰ ὥσπερ εἰς λιμένα ἀκύμαντον τὰς τῶν γεγηρακότων ὁρμίζει ψυχὰς, παρέχουσα τῇ παρὰ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐντρυφᾶν ἀσφαλείᾳ. Chryſ. *Tom.* 6. *Orat.* 38.

Long experience then hath diſcovered the vanity of all worldly things, and the miſchief of ill courſes; ſo that we can then hardly admire any thing, or be fond of en-

joying what we have found unprofitable or hurtfull.

Age is excuſed from compliance with the faſhions, and thence much exempted from temptations of the World; ſo that it may be good without obſtacle or oppoſition.

It is proper thereto to be grave and ſerious, and conſequently to be vertuous; for gravity without vertue and ſerioufneſs about vain things are ridiculous.

Nothing doth ſo adorn this age as goodneſs, nothing doth ſo diſ-
Prov. 16. 31. grace it as wickedneſs; *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteouſneſs*; but it is a mark of Infamy, if it be obſerved proceeding in a courſe of iniquity, it ſignifieth that experience hath not improved it, it argueth incorrigible folly, or rather incurable madneſs therein.

There is indeed no care, no employment proper for old Men but to prepare for their diſſolution; to be bidding adieu to the World with its

its vain Pomps and miſchievous Pleaſures; to be packing up their Goods, to be caſting their Accompts, to be fitting themſelves to abide in that ſtate into which they are tumbling, to appear at that Bar, before which ſuddenly nature will ſet them. As a Ship, which hath long been toſt and weather-beaten, which is ſhattered in its timber, and hath loſt much of its rigging, ſhould do nothing in that caſe but work toward the Port, there to find its ſafety and eaſe; ſo ſhould a Man, who having paſt many ſtorms and agitations of the World is grievouſly battered and torn with Age, ſtrive onely to die well, to get ſafe into the Harbour of eternal Reſt.

In freto vivimus, moriamur in portu. Sen. *Ep.* 19.

In fine, *Epicurus* himſelf ſaid well, that *no man is either immature or over-ripe in regard to his ſouls health*; we can never ſet upon it too ſoon, we ſhould never think it too late to begin; to live well is always the beſt thing we

Οὔτ' ἄωρος οὐδείς ἐστιν, οὔτε πέρωρος πρὸς τὸ κτῆσθαι ψυχὴν ὑγιαίνουσαν. Epic. *ad* Monœc.

can do, and therefore we ſhould at any time endeavour it; there are common reaſons for all ages, there are ſpecial reaſons for each age, which moſt ſtrongly and moſt clearly do urge it; it is moſt ſeaſonable for young Men, it is moſt neceſſary for old Men, it is moſt adviſeable for all Men *.

* *Quare juventus, imo omnis ætas (neque enim rectæ voluntati ſerum eſt tempus ullum) totis mentibus huc tendamus, in hoc elaboremus; forſan & conſummare contingat.* Quint. 12. 1.

Again, be our condition what it will, this advice is reaſonable: Are we in health? we owe God thanks for that excellent gift, and the beſt gratitude we can expreſs is the improving it for his ſervice and our own good; we ſhould not loſe the advantage of a ſeaſon ſo fit for our obedience and repentance; while the forces of our body and mind are entire, while we are not diſcompoſed by pain or faintneſs, we ſhould ſtrive to diſpatch this needfull work, for which infirmity may diſable us.

Are

Are we ſick? it is then time to conſider our frailty, and the beſt we can to obviate the worſt conſequences thereof: It is then very fit, when we do feel the ſad effects of ſin, to endeavour the prevention of worſe miſchiefs that may follow; it is ſeaſonable, when we lie under God's correcting hand to ſubmit unto him, to deprecate his wrath, to ſeek reconciliation with him by all kinds of obedience ſutable to that ſtate; with ſerious reſolutions to amend hereafter, if it ſhall pleaſe God to reſtore us; it is moſt adviſeable, when we are in the borders of death to provide for that ſtate, which lieth juſt beyond it.

Are we rich and proſperous? 'tis expedient then preſently to amend, leſt our Wealth do ſoon corrupt us with Pride, with Luxury, with Sloth, with Stupidity; leſt our Proſperity becometh an inevitable ſnare, an irrecoverable bane unto us. Prov. 1. 32.

Are we poor or afflicted? it is then alſo needfull to repent quickly; that

that we may have a comfortable ſupport for our ſoul, and a certain ſuccour in our diſtreſs; that we may get a treaſure to ſupply our want, a joy to drown our ſorrow; a buoy to keep our hearts from ſinking into deſperation and diſconſolateneſs. This condition is a medicine, which God adminiſtreth for our ſoul's health; if it do not work preſently ſo as to doe us good, it will prove both grievous and hurtfull to us.

13. Laſtly, we may conſider, that abating all the rufull conſequences of abiding in ſin, abſtracting from the deſperate hazards it expoſeth us to in regard to the future life, it is moſt reaſonable to abandon it, betaking our ſelves to a vertuous courſe of practice. For vertue in it ſelf is far more eligible than vice, to keep God's Commandments hath much greater convenience than to break them; the life of a good Man in all conſiderable reſpects is highly to be preferred above the life of a bad Man: for what is vertue, but a way of living

Eſt virtus nihil aliud quam in ſe perfecta, & ad ſummum perducta natura, Cic. *de Leg.* 1.

ving that advanceth our nature into a ſimilitude with God's moſt excellent and happy nature; that promoteth our true benefit and intereſt; that procureth and preſerveth health, eaſe, ſafety, liberty, peace, comfortable ſubſiſtence, fair repute, tranquillity of mind, all kinds of convenience to us? to what ends did our moſt benign and moſt wiſe Maker deſign and ſuit his Law, but to the furthering our good, and ſecuring us from miſchief, as not onely himſelf hath declared, but reaſon ſheweth, and experience doth atteſt? What is vice but a ſort of practice which debaſeth and diſparageth us, which plungeth us into grievous evils, which bringeth diſtemper of body and ſoul, diſtreſs of fortune, danger, trouble, reproach, regret, and numberleſs inconveniences upon us? which for no other reaſon, than becauſe it ſo hurteth and grieveth us, was by our loving Creatour interdicted to us? Vertue is moſt noble and worthy, moſt lovely, moſt profitable,

Deut. 10. 13. Mic. 6. 8. Neh. 9. 13. Rom. 7. 12. Pſal. 19. 9. 119. 107.

fitable, moſt pleaſant, moſt creditable; vice is moſt ſordid and baſe, ugly, hurtfull, bitter, diſgracefull, in it ſelf, and in its conſequences. If we compare them together, we ſhall find, that vertue doth always preſerve our health, but vice commonly doth impair it; that vertue improveth our eſtate, vice waſteth it; that vertue adorneth our reputation, vice blemiſheth it; that vertue ſtrengthneth our parts, vice weakneth them; that vertue maintaineth our freedom, vice enſlaveth us; that vertue keepeth our mind in order and peace, vice diſcompoſeth and diſquieteth it; vertue breedeth ſatisfaction and joy, vice ſpawneth diſpleaſure and anguiſh of conſcience: to enter therefore into a vertuous courſe of life, what is it but to embrace happineſs; to continue in vitious practice, what is it but to ſtick in miſery?

By entring into good life, we enter into the favour and friendſhip of God, engaging his infinite power and wiſe-

wiſedom for our protection, our ſuccour, our direction and guidance; enjoying the ſweet effluxes of his mercy and bounty; we therewith become friends to the holy Angels, and bleſſed Saints, to all good Men, being united in a holy and happy conſortſhip of judgment, of charity, of hope, of devotion with them; we become friends to all the World, which we oblige by good wiſhes, and good deeds, and by the influence of good example; we become friends to our ſelves, whom we thereby enrich and adorn with the beſt goods; whom we gratifie and pleaſe with the choiceſt delights: but perſiſting in ſin we continue to affront, wrong, and diſpleaſe our Maker, to be diſloyal toward our Sovereign Lord; to be ingratefull toward our chief Benefactour, to diſoblige the beſt Friend we have, to provoke a moſt juſt and ſevere Judge; to cope with Omnipotency, to contradict Infallibility; to enrage the greateſt Patience, to abuſe immenſe Goodneſs:

neſs: We thereby become enemies to all the World, to God, whom we injure and diſhonour; to the friends of God, whom we deſert and oppoſe; to the creatures which we abuſe to our pride, luſt and vanity; to our neighbours, whom we corrupt, or ſeduce; to our ſelves, whom we bereave of the beſt goods, and betray to the worſt evils.

Beginning to live ſoberly, we begin to live like Men, following the conduct of reaſon; beginning to live in charity, we commence the life of Angels, enjoying in our ſelves moſt ſweet content, and procuring great benefit to others; but going on in ſinfull voluptuouſneſs, we proceed to live like beaſts, wholly guided by ſenſe, and ſwayed by appetite; being pertinacious in malice we continue to be like fiends, working torment in our ſelves, and miſchief to our neighbours.

Embracing vertue we become wiſe and ſober Men, worthy and honourable, beneficial and uſefull to the

the World: but continuing in vice, we continue to be fooliſh and vain, to be vile and deſpicable, to be worthleſs and uſeleſs.

By our delay to amend, what do we gain? what, but a little flaſhy and tranſient pleaſure inſtead of a ſolid and durable peace; but a little counterfeit profit inſtead of real wealth; but a little ſmoak of deceitfull opinion inſtead of unqueſtionable ſound honour; ſhadows of imaginary goods inſtead of thoſe which are moſt ſubſtantial and true, a good mind, the love of God, the aſſured welfare of our ſouls. But this field of diſcourſe is too ſpatious, I ſhall onely therefore for concluſion ſay, that ſpeedily applying our ſelves to obedience, and breaking off our ſins by repentance, is in effect nothing elſe but from a preſent Hell in trouble, and the danger of a final Hell in torment to be tranſlated into a double Heaven; one of joyfull tranquillity here, another of bliſsfull reſt hereafter; unto the which

Almighty

Almighty God in his mercy bring us all, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praiſe. *Amen.*

1 Theſſ. 5. 23. *The very God of peace ſanctifie you wholly, and I pray God your whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Amen.

THE END.